

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## THE YELLOW FLAG.

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AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER IV. PAULINE.

THE cold grey morning light, shining through the little window of a small bedroom in a second-rate hotel at Lymington, made its way through the aperture between the common dimity curtains, which had been purposely separated overnight, and fell upon the slumbering figure of Pauline. The poor and scanty furniture of the room, with its dingy bed-hangings, its wooden washstand, two rush-bottomed chairs, and rickety one-sided chest of drawers, all painted a pale stone-colour, were in strong contrast with the richness of colouring observable in the sleeper; observable in her jet black hair, now taken from off her face and gathered into one large coil at the back of her head, in her olive complexion, sun-embrowned indeed, but yet showing distinctly the ebb and flow of her southern blood, and in the deep orange-hued handkerchief, daintily knotted round her neck. See, now, how troubled are her slumbers, how from between her parted lips comes a long though scarcely audible moan, how the strong thin hand lying outside the coverlet clutches convulsively at nothing, and how she seems in her unrest to be struggling to free herself from the thralldom of the troublous dream, under the influence of which part of the torture suffered by her during the previous day is again pressing upon her.

Yes! the woman with the pale tear-blurred face is there once again. Once again Tom Durham stands at the carriage door, whispering to her with evident earnestness, until the guard touches him on the

shoulder and the whistle shrieks, and then she bends forward and he holds her for a moment in his outspread arms and kisses her once, twice, thrice on her lips, until he is pulled aside by the porter coming to shut the door of the already moving carriage, and she falls back in an agony of grief. There is a moisture in his eyes too, such as she, Pauline, with all her experience of him, has never seen there. He is the lover of this pale-faced woman without a doubt, and therefore he must die! She will kill him herself! She will kill him with the pearl-handled knife which Gaetano, the mate of the Italian ship, gave her, telling her that all the Lombard girls wore such daggers in their garters ready for the heart of any Tedesco who might insult them, or any other girl who might prove their rival. The dagger is up-stairs, in the little bedroom at the top of the house, overlooking the Cannebière, which she shares with Mademoiselle Mathilde. She will fetch it at once, and after it has served its purpose she will carry it to the chapel of Notre Dame de la Garde, and hang it up among the votive offerings: the pictures of shipwrecks, storms, sea-fights, and surgical operations; the models of vessels, the ostrich eggs, the crutches left by cripples no longer lame, and the ends of the ropes by which men have been saved from drowning. How clearly she can see the place, and all its contents, before her now! She will leave the dagger there; as the weapon by which a traitor and an Englishman has been slain, it will not be out of place, though Père Gasselin shake his head and lift his monitory finger. She will fetch it at once! Ah, how delicious and yet how strange seem to her the smell of the pot-au-feu, and the warm aroma of the chocolate! How steep the stairs seem to have become: she will never

be able to reach the top! What is this Pierre and Jean are saying? The sea has swept away the breakwater at La Joliette, and is rapidly rushing into the town! It is here, it is in the street below! Fighting madly with the boiling waters is one man—she can catch a glimpse of his face now. Grand Dieu, it is Tom! She will save him—no, too late, he is borne swiftly past, he is——

And with a short suppressed scream she woke.

It was probably the rapping of the chambermaid at the bedroom door which dissipated Pauline's dream, and recalled her to herself, and it is certain that the chambermaid, whose quick ears caught the scream, went down-stairs more than ever impressed with terror at the "foreign person" whom she had scarcely had sufficient courage to conduct to her room on the previous evening. Notwithstanding the bizarre shape which they had assumed, these reminiscences of a portion of Pauline's past life had been so vivid, that it was with great difficulty she could clear her brain, and arrive at an idea of why she found herself in the dingy bedroom of a country inn, and of what lay before her. Sitting upon the edge of her bed with her arms crossed upon her bosom, she gradually recalled the occurrences of the previous day, and came to comprehend what had been the key-note of her dream, and who was the pale-faced woman whose presence had so disturbed her. There was, however, no time for reflection at that moment; she had been aroused in accordance with instructions given on the previous night, and there was but little time for her to dress herself and to make her way to the station, where she was to await the arrival of her husband. Her toilet completed, she hurried down-stairs, and declining to taste any of the substantial breakfast which the hearty Hampshire landlady was then engaged in discussing, and to which she invited her visitor, issued out into the broad street of the quiet old town.

Past the low-windowed shops, where the sleepy 'prentice boys were taking down the shutters, and indulging in such fragmentary conversation as could be carried on under the eyes of their masters, which they knew were bent upon them from the upper rooms; past the neat little post-office, where the click of the telegraph needles was already audible, and whence were issuing the sturdy country postmen, each with his huge well-filled leathern

wallet on his back; past the yacht builder's yard, where the air was redolent of pitch and tar, and newly chipped wood, where, through the half-opened gates, could be seen the slender, tapering masts of many yachts already laid up for the season in the creek, and where a vast amount of hammering and sawing and planing was, as the neighbours thought, interminably going on. Not but what the yacht-building yard is one of the great features of the place, for were it not for the yacht owners, who first come down to give orders about the building of their vessels, then pay a visit to see how their instructions are being carried out, and finally, finding the place comfortable, tolerably accessible, and not too dear, bring their wives and families, and make it their head-quarters for the yachting season, what stranger would ever come to Lymington, what occupants would be found for its lodging-houses and hotels?

The clock struck seven as Pauline passed through the booking-office at the railway station, and stepped out on to the platform. She looked hastily round her in search for Tom Durham, but did not see him. A sudden chill fell upon her as the remembrance of her dream flashed across her mind. The next instant she was chiding herself for imagining that he would be there. There was yet half an hour before the arrival of the train by which they were to proceed to Weymouth; he would be tired by his long swim from the ship to the shore, his clothes would of course be saturated, and he would have to dry them; he would, doubtless, rest as long as he could in the place where he had found shelter, and only join her just in time to start. There was no doubt about his finding shelter somewhere, he was too clever not to do that; he was the cleverest man in all the world; it was for his talent she had chosen him from all the others years ago, it was for—and then Pauline's face fell, remembering that Tom Durham was as unscrupulous as he was clever, and that if this pale-faced woman were really anything to him he would occupy his talent in arranging how and when to meet her in secret, in planning how to obtain further sums of money from the old man whose messenger she had been.

How the thought of that woman haunted her! How her whole life seemed to have changed since she had witnessed that parting at the railway station yesterday! She felt that it would be impossible for her to hide from Tom the fact that she was

labouring under doubt and depression of some kind or other. She knew his tact and determination in quickly learning whatever he thought it behoved him to find out; and she thought it would be better to speak openly to him, to tell him what she had seen, and to ask him for some explanation. Yes, she would do that. The train was then in sight, he would no longer delay putting in an appearance on the platform, and in a few minutes they would be travelling away to soft air and lovely scenery, with more than sufficient money for their present wants, and for a time at least with rest and peace before them. Then she would tell him all, and he would doubtless reassure her, showing her how silly and jealous she had been, but forgiving her because she had suffered solely through her love for him.

By this time a number of passengers had gathered together on the platform, awaiting the arrival of the train, and Pauline passed hastily among them looking eagerly to the right and left, and, retracing her steps through the booking-office, opened the door and glanced up the street leading to the station. No sign of Tom Durham anywhere! Perhaps he had found a nearer station to a point at which he had swum ashore, and would be in the train now rapidly approaching.

The train stopped; two or three passengers alighted, and were so soon mixed up with the crowd of sailors, ship-carpenters, and farm-labourers rushing to take their seats, that Pauline could not distinguish them, but she knew Tom was not amongst them; and when she walked quickly down the line of carriages, throwing a rapid but comprehensive glance round each, she saw him not, and the train passed on and she was left once more alone upon the platform.

Then, with frowning brows and set rigid lips, Pauline commenced walking up and down, covering with her long striding footsteps, so different from her usual easy, swimming gait, exactly the same amount of space at every turn, wheeling, apparently unconsciously, at the same point, treading almost in the same prints which she had previously made, keeping her eyes steadfastly fixed on the ground, and being totally unaware of all that was passing around her. She was a clear-headed as well as a strong-willed woman, accustomed to look life and its realities boldly in the face, and, unlike the majority of her countrymen and women, swift to detect shallow-

ness of sophistry when propounded by others, and careful never even to attempt to impose upon herself. Throughout her life, so long as she could remember, she had been in the habit of thinking out any project of importance which had arisen in her career while walking to and fro, just as she was doing then. It was, perhaps, the sameness of the action, perhaps some reminiscence of her dream still lingering in her mind, that turned her memory to the last occasion when she had taken such thoughtful exercise, and the scene, exactly as it occurred, rose before her.

The time, early morning, not much after six o'clock; the place, the Prado at Marseilles; the persons, a few belated, blue-bloused workmen hurrying to their work, a few soldiers lounging about as only soldiers always seem to lounge when they are not on duty, a limonadière with her temple deposited on the ground by her side, while she washes the sparkling tin cups in a gurgling drinking-fountain. Two or three water-carts pounding along and refreshingly sprinkling the white dusty road, two or three English grooms exercising horses, and she, Pauline Lunelle, dame du comptoir at the Restaurant du Midi, in the Cannebière, pacing up and down the Prado, and turning over in her mind a proposition, on the acceptance or rejection of which depended her future happiness or misery. That proposition was a proposition of marriage, not by any means the first that she had received. The handsome, black-eyed, black-haired, olive-skinned dame du comptoir was one of the reigning belles of the town, and the Restaurant du Midi was such a popular place of resort, that she never lacked admirers. All the breakfast-eaters, the smokers, the billiard-players, even the decorated old gentlemen who dropped in as regularly as clockwork every evening for a game of dominoes or tric-trac, paid their court to her, and in several cases this court was something more than the mere conventional hat-doffing or the few words of empty politeness whispered to her as she attended to the settlement of their accounts. Adolphe de Noailles, only a sous-lieutenant of artillery to be sure, but a man of good family, and who, it was said, was looked upon with favour by Mademoiselle Krebs, daughter of old Monsieur Krebs, the German banker, who was so rich, and who gave such splendid parties, had asked Pauline Lunelle to become his wife, had "ah-bah-d" when she talked about the difference in their posi-

tions, and had insisted that in appearance and manner she was equal to any lady in the south of France. So had Henrich Wetter, head clerk and cashier in the bank of Monsieur Krebs aforesaid, a tall, fair, lymphatic young man, who, until his acquaintance with Pauline, had thought of nothing but Vaterland and the first of exchange, but who professed himself ready to become naturalised as a Frenchman, and to take up his abode for life in Marseilles, if she would only listen to his suit. So had Frank Jenkins, attached to the British post-office, and in that capacity bringing the Indian mails from London to Marseilles, embarking them on board the Peninsular and Oriental steamer, and waiting the arrival of the return mail which carried them back to England; a big, jolly, massive creature, well known to everybody in the town as Monsieur Jenkins, or the "courrier Anglais," who had a bedroom at the Hotel de Paradis, but who spent the whole of his time at the Restaurant du Midi, drinking beer, or brandy, or absinthe, it was all the same to him, to keep the landlord "square," as he phrased it, but never taking his eyes off the dame du comptoir, and never losing an opportunity of paying her the most outrageous compliments in the most outrageous French ever heard even in that city of polyglot strangers.

If Pauline Lunelle had a tenderness for any of them, it was for the sous-lieutenant; at the Englishmen, and, indeed, at a great many others—Frenchmen, commis-voyageurs, tradesmen in the city, or clerks in the merchants' offices on the Quai—she laughed unmercifully. Not to their faces, indeed, that would have been bad for business, and Pauline throughout her life had the keenest eye to her own benefit. Her worth as a decoy-duck was so fully appreciated by Monsieur Etienne, the proprietor of the restaurant, that she had insisted upon receiving a commission on all moneys paid by those whose visits thither were unquestionably due to her attraction. But when they had retired for the night, the little top bedroom which she occupied in conjunction with Mademoiselle Mathilde would ring with laughter caused by her repetition of the sweet things which had been said to her during the evening by her admirers, and her imitations of the manner and accents in which they had been delivered. So Adolphe de Noailles had it all his own way, and Pauline had seriously debated within herself whether she should not let

him run the risk of offending his family and marrying him out of hand (the disappointment to be occasioned thereby to Mademoiselle Krebs, a haughty and purse-proud young lady, being one of her keenest incentives to the act), when another character appeared upon the scene.

This was another Englishman, but in every way as different as possible to poor Mr. Jenkins; not merely speaking French like a Parisian, but salting his conversation with a vast amount of Parisian idiomatic slang, full of fun and wild practical jokes; impervious to ridicule, impossible to be put down, and spending his money in the most lavish and free-handed manner possible. This was Tom Durham, who had suddenly turned up in Marseilles, no one knew why; he had been to Malta, he said, on a "venture," and the venture had turned out favourably, and he was going back to England, and had determined to enjoy himself by the way. He was constantly at the Restaurant du Midi, paid immense attention to the dame du comptoir, and she in her turn was fascinated by his good temper, his generous ways, his strange, eccentric goings on. But Tom Durham, laughing, drinking, and spending his money, was the same cool, observant creature that he had been ever since he shipped as 'prentice on board the Gloucestershire, when he was fifteen years of age. All the time of his sojourn at the Restaurant du Midi he was carefully "taking stock," as he called it, of Pauline Lunelle. In his various schemes he had long felt the want of a female accomplice, and he thought he had at last found the person whom he had for some time been seeking. That she was worldly-wise he knew, or she would never have achieved the position which she held in Monsieur Etienne's establishment; that there was far more in her than she had ever yet given proof of, he believed, for Mr. Tom Durham was a strong believer in physiognomy, and had more than once found the study of some use to him. Sipping his lemonade and cognac and puffing at his cigar, he sat night after night, talking pleasantly with any chance acquaintance, but inwardly studying Pauline Lunelle, and when his studies were completed he had made up his mind that he saw in her a wonderful mixture of headstrong passion and calm common sense, unscrupulous, unfearful, devoted, and capable of carrying out anything, no matter what, which she had once made up her mind to perform. "A tameable tiger, in point of



fact," said Tom Durham to himself as he stepped out into the street and picked his way across the filthy gutters towards his home, "and if only kept in proper subjection, capable of being made anything of." He knew there was only one way by which Pauline could be secured, and he made up his mind to propose to her the next night.

He proposed accordingly, but Pauline begged for four and twenty hours to consider her decision, and in the early morning went out into the Prado to think it all through, and deliberately to weigh the merits of the propositions made respectively by Adolphe de Noailles and Tom Durham; the result being, that the sous-lieutenant's hopes were crushed for ever—or for fully a fortnight, when they blossomed in another direction—and that Pauline, *dame du comptoir* no longer, linked her fate with that of Tom Durham. Thenceforward they were all in all to each other; she had no relatives, nor, as he told her, had he ("I have not seen Alice for five years," he said to himself, "and from what I recollect of her, she was a stuck-up, strait-laced little minx, likely to look down upon my young friend, the tiger, here, and give herself airs which the tiger certainly would not understand, so as they are not likely to come together, it will be better to ignore her existence altogether"). In all his crooked schemes, and they were many and various, Pauline took her share, unflagging, indefatigable, clear in council, prompt in action, jealous of every word, of every look he gave to any other woman, at the same time the slave of his love, and the prop and mainstay of his affairs. Tom Durham himself had not that quality which he imputed to his half-sister: he certainly was not strait-laced, but his escapades, if he had any, were carefully kept in the background, and Pauline, suspicious as she was, had never felt any real ground for jealousy until she had witnessed the scene at parting at the Southampton station.

The Prado and its associations had faded out of her mind, and she was trying to picture to herself the various chances which could possibly have detained her husband, when a porter halted before her, and civilly touching his cap, asked for what train she was waiting.

"The train for Weymouth," she replied.

"For Weymouth!" echoed the porter; "the train for Weymouth has just gone."

"Yes, I know that," said Pauline, "but

I was expecting some one—a gentleman—to meet me. He will probably come in time for the next."

"You will have a longish waiting bout," said the man; "next train don't come till two forty-five, nigh upon three o'clock."

"That is long," said Pauline. "And the next?"

"Only one more after that," said the porter, "eight-forty; gets into Weymouth somewhere between ten and eleven at night. You'll never think of waiting here, ma'am, for either of them! Better go into the town to one of the hotels, or have a row on the river, or something to pass the time."

"Thank you," said Pauline, to whom a sudden idea had occurred. "How far is it from here to—how do you call the place—Hurstcastle?"

"To where, ma'am? Oh, Hurst Castle; I didn't understand you, you see, at first; you didn't make two words of it. It is Hurst Castle, where the king was kept a prisoner—him as had his head cut off; and where there's a barracks and a telegraph station for the ships now?"

"Yes," she said, "exactly, that's the place: how far is it from here?"

"Well, it's about seven mile, take it altogether, but you can't drive all the way. You could have a fly to take you four miles, and he'd bring you to a boat, and he'd take you in and out down a little river through the marshes, until you came to a beach, on the other side of which the castle stands. But lor' bless me, miss, what's the use o' going at all, there's nothing to see when you get there!"

"I wish to go," said Pauline, smiling. "You see I am a foreigner, and I want to see where your British king was kept a prisoner. Can I get a fly here?"

The porter said he would find her one at once, and speedily redeemed his promise.

Through neat villages and wooded lanes Pauline was driven, until she came to a large, bare, open tract of country, on the borders of which the fly stopped, and the flyman descending handed her down some steps cut in the steep bank and into an old broad-bottomed boat, where a grizzled elderly man, with his son, were busy mending an old duck gun. They looked up with astonishment when the flyman said, "Lady wants to go down to have a look at the castle, Jack: I'll wait here, ma'am, until they bring you back."

They spread an old jacket for her in the

stern of the boat, and when she was seated, took to their oars and pulled away with a will. It was a narrow, intricate, winding course, a mere thread of shallow, sluggish water, twisting in and out among the great grey marshes fringed with tall flapping weeds; and Pauline, already overexcited and overwrought, was horribly depressed by the scene.

"Are you always plying in this boat?" she asked the old man.

"Most days, ma'am, in case we should be wanted up at the steps, there," he replied, "but night's our best time we reckon."

"Night!" she echoed. "Surely there are no passengers at night time?"

"No, ma'am, not passengers, but officers and sportsmen: gentlemen coming out gunning after the ducks and the wild-fowl," he added, seeing she looked puzzled, and pointing to a flock of birds feeding at some distance from them.

"And are you out every night?" she asked eagerly.

"Well, not every, but most nights, ma'am."

"Last night, for example?"

"Yes, miss, we was out, me and Harry here, not with any customers, but by ourselves; a main dark night it was too! but we hadn't bad sport, considering."

"Did you—did you meet any one else between this and Hurst Castle?"

"Well, no, ma'am," said the old man, with a low chuckle. "It ain't a place where one meets many people, I reckon. Besides the ducks, a heron or two was about the strangest visitors we saw last night. Now, miss, here we are at the beach; you go straight up there, and you'll find the castle just the other side. When you come back, please shape your course for that black stump you see sticking up there; tide's falling, and we shan't be able to bide where we are now, but we will meet you there."

Lightly touching the old man's arm, Pauline jumped from the boat, and rapidly ascending the sloping head, found herself, on gaining the top, close by a one-storied, whitewashed cottage, in a little bit of reclaimed land, half garden, half yard, in which was a man in his shirt-sleeves washing vegetables, with a big black retriever dog lying at his feet. Accosting him, Pauline learned that the house was the telegraph station, whence the names of the outgoing and incoming ships are telegraphed to Lloyd's for the information of

their owners. In the course of further conversation the man said that the *Massilia* had anchored there during the night, had got her steam up and was off by daybreak; he took watch and watch with his comrade, and he turned out just in time to see her start.

Pauline thanked him and returned to the boat; but she did not speak to the old man on her return passage, and when she reached the fly which was waiting for her, she threw herself into a corner and remained buried in thought until she was deposited at the station.

A few minutes after, the train bound for Weymouth arrived. Through confusion, similar to that of the morning, she hurried along, criticising the passengers on the platform and in the carriages, and with the same vain result. The train proceeded on its way, and Pauline walked towards the hotel with the intention of getting some refreshment, which she needed. Suddenly she paused, reeled, and would have fallen, had she not leant against a wall for support. A thought like an arrow had passed through her brain—a thought which found its utterance in these words:

"It is a trick, a vile trick from first to last! He has deceived me—he never intended to meet me, to take me to Weymouth or to Guernsey! It was merely a trick to keep me occupied and to put me off while he rejoined that woman!"

#### DON JUAN IN BRANDENBURG.

"It was long my opinion," said Maximilian, "that the story of Don Juan of Seville and the stone-guest stood alone among popular traditions; but I have lately found a faint resemblance of it among the legends of Stendal.

"You mean the city in the Old March of Brandenburg—the Altmark, as it is called?" inquired Laurence.

"Precisely," replied Maximilian.

"Well, certainly," observed Laurence, "if you want to find a horrible story you could not go to a better place. If I recollect right, there is a pathway near one of the gates of Stendal, that at midnight is haunted by ghosts so various, that one seldom has a chance of seeing the same apparition twice. Sometimes there is a procession of spectral nuns, with Saint Catherine at the head; sometimes a troop of monks, with large books in their hands; sometimes a couple of knights on horse-

back; sometimes a skeleton hand, supposed to have belonged to a murderer, who avoided execution by suicide."

"Does the hand walk or ride?" interrupted Edgar.

"That I cannot say," said Laurence, "nor do I know the stories with which these apparitions are connected. There is, however, another spectre appertaining to the same spot, of which a more satisfactory explanation is given. This is a great he-cat, who sits on a tree, looking greedily at a coin which lies upon the ground, and springs upon any luckless wanderer who attempts to pick it up. His attacks, however, are generally confined to the male sex, and he is sometimes accompanied by a number of she-cats, who vent their spite upon trespassing females. Now it is explained that these feline apparitions are the ghosts of a spendthrift, and the ladies upon whom, no doubt, he wasted his substance."

"I wonder," remarked Edgar, "whether these various ghosts, who seem actuated by such diverse motives, ever jostle one another, or whether there is some mutual understanding that prevents a collision. An unexpected meeting of the monks, the nuns, the two horsemen, and the cats, to say nothing of the skeleton hand, would, I opine, cause something like a crash."

"You are getting beyond me," said Laurence; "I can only repeat what I have heard. Certainly, it is strange to find one narrow spot associated with superstitions scarcely traceable to one common source. Now, there is a rude image of a sheep or a lamb on St. Mary's Church, at Stendal, which probably points to something like a fact. It seems that, ages ago, a shepherd, watching his sheep while they grazed outside the city walls, was suddenly overtaken by sleep. When he awoke he found that his flock was dispersed in all directions, and though, with the assistance of his dog, he soon brought the other sheep together, one lamb was not to be moved, but remained bleating on the spot to which it had strayed. The shepherd followed the sound, and found the animal standing upon a heap of gold, silver, and precious stones, which it had scratched out of the ground with its foot. Of this treasure he possessed himself, and carried the lamb into the town, but the troublesome little animal effected its escape, and took refuge in the church, where the bleating was renewed. The shepherd regarded this as a sign that the treasure

was to be devoted to the improvement of the sacred building, and caused an image of the lamb to be carved in stone in commemoration of the event."

"The shepherd, I presume, was content with the reward which virtue claims as its own," observed Edgar.

"Even the old story of the Prentice Column in Roslin Chapel, near Edinburgh, is to be found at Stendal in reference, not to a column, but to a gate. Some time in the fifteenth century, a skilful architect had built a gate at Stendal, and a few years afterwards another gate was built by one of his pupils. The work of the pupil proved to be better than that of the master, whereat the latter was so highly incensed that he slew the former with a blow of his hammer. A stone, which still exists, was raised to mark the spot where the crime was committed."

"That is the story of the Prentice Column exactly," exclaimed Edgar.

"With the slight addition," said Laurence, "that, according to popular belief, the form of a pale youth may be seen on a moonlight night, gloomily contemplating the pupil's gate, while round the battlements on the top of it floats a skeleton, armed with a hammer, with which it beats down stones from the wall."

"Nay," interposed Maximilian, "there is a similar story told in reference to another stone cross, set up at Grossmöringen, in the vicinity of Stendal, though here the cause of wrath was a bell, which an assistant had succeeded in casting, after an abortive attempt on the part of the master, and was stabbed accordingly."

"The disposition to crush rising talent is so very common," observed Laurence, "that these three stories, in spite of their similarity, probably record three separate events. Still the similarity is remarkable."

"Especially in the cases of Stendal and Grossmöringen, which are about two leagues distant from each other," remarked Maximilian. "Grossmöringen, by the way, seems always to have made a noise with its bells. A swineherd once noticing a hollow place where one of his sows had deposited her pigs, discovered that it was lined with metal. Digging deeply, he further discovered that the metal belonged to a fine church bell. No sooner was the event made known, than the bell was claimed by the authorities of the cathedral at Stendal, who built an especially large waggon, and attached thereto sixteen horses, in order to bring the

prize home. But all the men and all the horses of Stendal were insufficient to make the bell stir a single inch. So the peasants of Grossmöringen thought they would try their luck, and succeeded in taking the bell to their village, though they employed only eight horses. Nay, according to some accounts, one peasant and one horse were found enough for the operation."

"We'll let the eight horses have the benefit of that doubt," suggested Edgar.

"The bell," proceeded Maximilian, "was hung up in the village church, and now the people of Stendal grew disagreeable, and, as the fox found the grapes too sour, considered the bell of the village too loud. It was a nuisance, they declared, and moreover, a misleader, for whenever it rang, the sound seemed to come from the belfry of one of their own churches."

"Although it was two leagues off! The citizens of Stendal were quick at hearing," said Edgar.

"At all events," retorted Maximilian, "it seems to be an undisputed fact that the villagers were obliged to close the opening in the belfry that looks towards the city."

"The story of the burgomaster of Stendal and the white horse is rather curious," interrupted Laurence, "and the more so that it is not of ancient date."

"What is it?" inquired Edgar.

"They say," answered Laurence, "that in the seventeenth century many fires took place in the city, and that at last there was one which defied every effort to extinguish it. Indeed, as the available means of extinguishment were scanty, the efforts were far from prompt. Under these inauspicious circumstances, the burgomaster betook himself to prayer, and his supplications were apparently answered by the appearance of a stranger, mounted on a white horse, from which he alighted, desiring the burgomaster to take his place in the saddle, and to ride round the burning house, still continuing his prayers in silence. If he did this, the spread of the fire beyond the precincts of the house would be prevented. The counsel was followed, and the plan succeeded; but when the burgomaster dismounted the stranger had disappeared. A stable was accordingly built for the horse, and abundant provision was made for his sustenance at the expense of the city."

"On this occasion," remarked Edgar, "the citizens of Stendal seem to have been more amiable than usual. At least they showed their gratitude."

"Nay, gratitude was not their only motive," replied Laurence. "They maintained the horse, not merely because they respected, but because they considered him useful. And good use they made of him. Whenever a fire occurred, the burgomaster mounted the back of the steed, went through the process prescribed on the previous occasion, and with a like fortunate result. At last the horse died, and the whole city, plunged into mourning, resounded with the shrieks of children and the sobs of adults. To make matters worse, a fire broke out, adding terror to grief. Fortunately the burgomaster thought he might as well try whether he could not do without the horse, and stay the spreading mischief by walking round the flaming edifice, praying as before. The walk proved to be as good as the ride, and so thoroughly was the efficiency of the process established, that it was upheld, on the occasion of a fire, by successive burgomasters down to the year 1840."

"Were not the date so recent," observed Edgar, "I should suspect that some satirical rogue had invented the second part of the story, as what some people call a 'skit' upon the first. If we take the whole tale together, as of one piece, the horse looks very like a humbug; indeed, he puts me in mind of a certain bear, of whom mention is made in a well-known political work entitled the Rights of Man."

"An odd place to look for legends," sneered Laurence.

"Many years have passed since the book was in my hands," retorted Edgar; "but whether I looked for the story or not, I am pretty sure I found it there. It appears that the inhabitants of one of the Swiss cantons maintained a bear at the public expense for many years, the death of each particular bear causing a vacancy, which had to be filled with the least possible delay. The bear was not expected to do any especial good or harm, but public opinion had decided that a bear was the proper sort of animal to keep, and that the cantor could not possibly thrive without one. In the course of time a difficulty arose. A bear died, and a successor was not to be found. There was a scarcity of bears such as never had been known in the land. Week after week did a council sit discussing how the frightful loss was to be repaired; but though this council resolved itself into special committees, appointed sub-committees, and offered rewards that would have drained the resources of the land, no bear was forthcoming. At last



an old councillor, who must have been very like your burgomaster, arose and called attention to the fact that, although the last bear had been dead for several months, no particular calamity had afflicted the canton beyond the annoyance of its own (he would not say foolish) fears. On this basis he moved that the offers of reward should be cancelled, and that they should continue to do without a bear, till warned by some palpable sign of their impropriety. The motion, having the unquestionable advantage of economy in its favour, was eagerly seconded, and carried unanimously; and from that time forward the public purse was never drained for the maintenance of a bear."

"These committees and sub-committees, and movers and seconders," observed Maximilian, "lead me to suspect, my good Edgar, that this Swiss legend, doubtless antique in its origin, has received some colouring from the narrator. It lacks the mediæval ring, and there is an irreverent tone about it which brings me back to the point at which I started."

"What point was that?" simultaneously inquired Laurence and Edgar.

"I stated that in this same Stendal, which we have been so largely discussing, I had discovered a similitude to the Andalusian Don Juan."

"So you did," assented Laurence; "but upon my word I had forgotten all about it."

"I also," ejaculated Edgar; "really I beg your pardon, my dear Maximilian. Tell us all about it now."

"Well," said Maximilian, looking more cheerful than for some time previously, "you must know that in the market-place of Stendal is a statue of the well-known knight, Roland, the Orlando of Ariosto."

"Stop a bit," interrupted Laurence. "Don't be too sure that the statue, because it is called Roland, has any reference to Ariosto. In the cities of the Altmark, a Roland, that is to say, the figure of a stalwart knight, is generally to be found, and all the Rolands are alike in this, that, with the exception of the one at Perleberg, which lies to the north, they wear a moustache without a beard."

"The Roland of whom I am speaking," proceeded Maximilian, in a less cheerful tone, "holds in his left hand a shield, adorned with the eagle of Brandenburg—"

"Or Anhalt?" suggested Laurence.

"Whichever you please," replied Maximilian, fretfully. "Do let me get on some-

how. In his right hand Roland holds a long sword, intended for the sword of justice, and it is recorded that in early days malefactors were executed near the spot where he stands. Behind him is a figure of Eulenspiegel, or Owl-glass, evidently intended as a monument of a visit paid to the town by that world-famed jester."

"I know what Eulenspiegel did at Stendal," interrupted Laurence.

"So do I," said Maximilian, gruffly.

"But I do not," observed Edgar, with a malicious smile. "Let Laurence tell us all about it."

"I will send you the old book recording all the adventures of Eulenspiegel. Read it to-morrow at leisure, and much pleasure may it give you; but let me get through my story now. The Roland at Stendal, though he does not seem to date further back than the beginning of the sixteenth century, has occasionally been known to relieve the monotony of his existence by turning round, or even stepping from his pedestal and taking a stroll about the streets."

"Who is supposed to have seen him perform these feats?" inquired Edgar.

"Several people, I believe," answered Maximilian, "but they generally liked to see him at a distance, and did not much care to inspect him closely."

"This seems to be a case to which the hackneyed line—'Distance lends enchantment to the view,' will apply with singular force," said Laurence.

"One citizen, however," proceeded Maximilian, "chanced on the occasion of some festival to imbibe liquor sufficient to endow him with an amount of courage such as he had never previously displayed, or probably felt. This same extemporaneous ribald took it into his head to stalk up to the statue and make mouths at it. This the magnanimous Roland endured, but when the citizen went further and insolently pitied him, because he could not take a glass, the insult was too great even for a man of stone to endure; so solemnly revolving on his feet, he turned his back on his assailant. The movement so terrified the citizen, that he became sober at once; and was never afterwards known to commit an excess. You will be greatly surprised, however, to hear that on the following morning the statue stood in its proper position, just as if nothing had happened."

"Nay, for my part," rejoined Edgar, "as I am convinced it was not the statue, but the head of the spectator that went

round, my surprise is but moderate, and I have no doubt that my views coincide with those of Laurence."

"At all events," said Maximilian, "you have here a ribald, who wantonly insults a stone statue, which, nevertheless, is sensitive enough to resent the wrong, and herein is the nucleus of the Andalusian story, though the drunken cit of the Almark makes but a poor figure beside the lordly libertine of Seville."

"Agreed, agreed," cried Edgar, while Laurence nodded assent; "the discovery of Don Juan at Stendal is clear beyond a doubt."

"And let me add, by way of conclusion," observed Maximilian, with a condoning smile, "that thanks to kindly interruptions, you have taken a long time to find him."

#### LAUNCHED.

'NEATH a smiling sun and a wooing gale,  
I set my feather-boats to sail,  
By one, by two, by three.  
One was laden with First Love's vow,  
One had Fortune's flag at her prow,  
One, Fame had freighted for me.

Never a weather sign I scanned,  
As my gay bark left the flowery land  
On a merry morn of May.  
Down swept a squall of Doubt and Chance,  
And wrecked on the shoal of Circumstance,  
My first fair venture lay.

Gravely I looked to rigging and rope,  
Ere, bathed in the lustre of golden hope,  
My next to the open bore.  
But fierce and treacherous rose the waves,  
More ships than mine found fathomless graves,  
Ere the noontide storm was o'er.

To the lulling whispers of Art and Song,  
I framed my last boat true and strong,  
And decked her with joyous dreams.  
And sent her forth with a rosy smile,  
Tingeing her silken sails the while,  
Caught from the sunset's gleams.

But oh, she never returned again,  
O'er the wild waste water my sad eyes strain,  
In the sickness of hope deferred.  
And I think sometimes, should she yet come back  
With the world's slow plaudits loud on her track,  
Will the grass on my grave be stirred?

#### CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

##### MARYLEBONE.

In the year 1541, Thomas Hobson, lord of the manor of Marylebone, exchanged it with Henry the Eighth for certain church lands, and a royal manor-house was built in this reign; probably as a sort of hunting-box, as the adjoining park was full of deer. Both Mary and Elizabeth used the box as an occasional palace. In the reign of the latter queen, the keeper of "Maribone

Park received a salary of twelve pounds thirteen and fourpence a year," the keeper of the house, the convent-garden, and the woods ten pounds a year, and the lieutenant of the chase the same sum. In the Board of Works account for 1582 there is a payment for standings, made both in Maribone and Hide Parks, "for the queen's majestie and the noblemen of Fraunce to see the huntinge." From Edward Fosset (to whom the park was sold by James the First) it passed to Thomas Austin, Esquire. In 1710, the manor was purchased by John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, whose only daughter and heir married Swift's friend and patron, Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer. The manor passed in 1734 to the second Duke of Portland, who married the only daughter and heir of the Earl of Oxford.

In Queen Elizabeth's time, in February, 1600, the Russian Ambassador and his retinue rode through the City of London to Marylebone Park (where, some years before, Babbington and his fellow-conspirators had taken refuge), and there hunted for their pleasure.

It was before this that handsome Sir Charles Blount (afterwards Earl of Devonshire) had fought the Earl of Essex in Marylebone Park, disarmed him and wounded him in the thigh. The quarrel of the two gallants had arisen on account of a chess-queen of gold, which Elizabeth had given Blount on account of his having distinguished himself in the tilt-yard. This favour the favoured man had tied on his arm with a crimson ribbon, and jealous Essex, perceiving this, had said, "Now, I perceive, every fool must have a favour." In Cromwell's time the park was settled on Colonel Thomas Harrison's regiment of dragoons for their pay, Sir John Ipsley being ranger by authority of the Protector.

In 1809, Nash, the Regent's favourite architect, prepared plans for Regent's Park and adjoining streets. The new enclosure was called the Regent's Park because the worthy Regent had expressed somewhere to somebody some anxiety to see the neighbourhood improved.

When King James sold the manor of Marylebone, he reserved the park, which, in 1646, Charles the First assigned to certain creditors as security for a debt for arms and ammunition supplied to him during the war he waged against the parliament. Cromwell, disregarding this assignment, sold the park to John Spencer, gentleman of London, for thirteen thousand two hun-

dred and fifteen pounds six shillings and eightpence, including thirteen pounds for one hundred and twenty-four deer, and seventeen hundred and seventy-four pounds eight shillings for timber, exclusive of two thousand nine hundred and seventy-six tons marked for the navy, hereafter to be floated off against the Dutch, disgracefully burnt at Chatham, or splintered and smashed by Opdam's and Van Tromp's cannon. At the Restoration, King Charles's assignment was held good, and the park, till the debt was liquidated, assigned to the original guaranties.

Marylebone Gardens stood on what is now Beaumont-street, Devonshire-street, and part of Devonshire-place. Pepys mentions the gardens as being pretty in 1668. Gay alludes to dog-fighting at Marylebone, and in his *Beggars' Opera* describes Captain Macheath as a frequenter of Marylebone and the chocolate-houses, "keeping too good company," as Peachum says, "ever to grow rich." In the same play the gallant captain says to one of his gang, "There will be deep play to-night at Marylebone, and, consequently, money may be picked up upon the road; meet me there, and I'll give you the hint who is worth setting."

The carriage and principal entrance to the gardens was in High-street, the back opened to fields, beyond which was a narrow winding passage between garden palings, that led back into the High-street. In this passage were openings to various small gardens, intended for the recreation of cockney florists, their wives, children, and Sunday smoking visitors. They were called the French Gardens, in consequence of having been first cultivated by refugees, or, as some say, because a French chapel had once stood on their site. They were opened by a man named Gough, some time before the year 1737, and a shilling was demanded for admission, for which an equivalent was given in refreshment. Indeed, as early as 1708 there were two bowling-greens at Marylebone, one near the top of the High-street, near the manor-house, another at the back of the Rose of Normandy public-house, Bowling Green-lane, or Bowling-street, forming its southern boundary. The first was connected with the Rose Tavern, a noted gaming-house, at one time much frequented by persons of rank. Afterwards it became disreputable, and was incorporated with Marylebone Gardens.

Lady Mary Wortley alludes to the fond-

ness of the Duke of Buckingham for this place in the line:

Some dukes at Marybone bowl time away.

The duke himself says, in one of his letters, noting the place alluded to be Marylebone: "After I have dined (either agreeably with friends, or at worst with better company than your country neighbours), I drive away to a place of air and exercise, which some constitutions are in absolute need of; agitation of the body and diversion of the mind being a composition for health above all the skill of Hippocrates."

Pennant calls Marylebone Gardens "the place of assemblage of all the infamous sharpers of the time, to whom the Duke of Buckingham always gave a dinner at the conclusion of the season," always drinking, as Quin told Pennant, the following ominous toast:

"May as many of us as remain unchanged next spring meet here again."

The duke died in 1721. In 1718, the Marylebone bowling-greens were not illuminated, as usual, on the king's birthday, as the Kensington and Richmond Gardens held their rival illuminations instead. In 1738, a Mr. Gough enlarged the gardens, built an orchestra, and issued annual tickets, twelve shillings for the season. The ordinary admission was sixpence for the evening. The gardens were open from six till ten. In 1740, when the new room was erected, the admission was increased to one shilling. In 1771, a grand martial composition of music was performed by Mr. Lampe, in honour of Admiral Vernon's taking Carthage. In 1743, the holders of Marylebone Garden tickets let them out at reduced prices for the evening. Ranelagh tickets could also be had at old Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's-lane. In 1786, highwaymen had grown so desperate, and intercepted so many visitors on their return from the gardens, that the proprietor was obliged to have a guard of soldiers to protect the company to and from London. No person was admitted to the balls in 1748 but in full dress. In 1751, John Trusler, a cook, was sole proprietor, and a ten and sixpenny ticket admitted two persons to the ball-room. The doors opened at nine o'clock. In 1753, the gardens were enlarged by taking in the bowling-green, and lights were erected in the coach-way from Oxford-road, and also on the footpath from Cavendish-square. The fireworks that year are described as splendid. There was

a large sun at the top of a picture, a cascade, a shower of flame, grand air-balloons, and red fire. In 1756, two rooms were opened for dinner-parties. In 1788, the ball-room tickets of five shillings each admitted a gentleman and two ladies. Only twenty-five of these tickets were issued for the same evening. Mr. Trusler's son produced *La Serva Padrona*, the first burletta performed in the gardens. He only received the profit of the libretto books. Poor Chatterton produced a piece at Marylebone.

In 1759, the gardens were opened for breakfasts, and Miss Trusler made the cakes. In 1760, the gardens were opened on Sunday evening, after five o'clock, gratis, and visitors were accommodated with coffee, tea, and cakes. A drawing, made by Goslin, in 1700, of Marylebone House, comprises the field-gate, palace, and the surrounding walls to the south-west, including a large mansion, probably Oxford House, the receptacle of the Harleian Library. It afterwards became an academy, occupied by a *Monsieur de la Place*, a daughter of whom married the Reverend Mr. Fountayne, rector of North Tidworth, in Wiltshire, who afterwards carried it on.

This house, which stood on the east side of the road on the site of Devonshire-mews, Devonshire-street, New-road, was pulled down in 1791. Drawings, made by Michael Angelo Rooker, show us a mansion with two wings, a projecting porch, and an enormously deep dormer roof, supported by numerous cantilevers, in the centre of which there is a very bold pediment, a shield surrounded by foliage, with labels beneath. The garden front consists of a flat face with a bay window at each end glazed in quarrils, and the wall of the whole back front is crowned by five gables. In the garden stands a hale, hearty gentleman, dressed in black, wearing a white Busby wig and a three-cornered hat. This is, possibly, the Reverend Mr. Fountayne, as he seems to be directing a gardener how to distribute some plants. A third drawing exhibits the grand tessellated staircase, the balustrade of which consists of richly-carved perforated foliage. The mansion was entirely of brick, and was surmounted by a large clock and bell tower.

This Mr. Fountayne had one son, who became Dean of York, and one of his daughters, who was esteemed a great beauty, married Counsellor Hargrave. The sister of Mr. Fountayne's wife married the

Reverend Mr. Dyer, brother of the author of "Grongar Hill." Mr. Fountayne, a friend of Clarke, the celebrated Greek scholar, and also of Handel, was fond of giving musical parties, and the old house boasted a beautiful saloon and gallery, especially adapted for such amusements.

One day, when Mr. Fountayne and Handel were walking together in the Marylebone Gardens, listening to the music, "Come, Mr. Fountayne," said Handel, "come, my friend, let us sit down and listen to this piece. What is your opinion of it?" "It is not worth listening to," replied the old gentleman, with a gesture of dislike; "it is poor stuff." "You are right, Mr. Fountayne—you are right," replied Handel—"it is very poor stuff. I thought so myself when I finished it." The old gentleman began to stammer out an apology, but Handel checked him, saying that the music was really bad, being hastily composed, and that his opinion was as correct as it was honest.

Mrs. Fountayne was a vain, dashing woman, extremely fond of appearing at court, for which purpose she used to borrow Lady Barrington's jewels. Her passion for display was so great that she kept a carriage, unknown to her husband, by the following unworthy manœuvre. As her husband's scholars were mostly sons of people of wealth and rank, she professed to have many favourites, whom she used to take to the play as a treat when they had behaved well, the parents gladly paying for the tickets and the carriage; but, as the tickets were presents from her friend, Mrs. Yates, her profits on the half-year enabled her to keep a carriage; as for Mrs. Yates, she was rewarded by the numerous benefit tickets disposed of by Mrs. Fountayne.

That pleasant and inveterate gossip, Nollekens Smith, describes, when a boy, being allowed by his mother one summer Sunday morning, in 1774, to stand and see the young gentlemen of Mr. Fountayne's boarding-school cross the road to church. He says: "I remember well, a summer's sun shone with full effulgence at the time, and my youthful eyes were dazzled with the various colours of the dresses of the youths, who walked two-and-two, some in pea-green, others in sky-blue, and several in the brightest scarlet; many of them wore gold-laced hats, while the flowing locks of others, at that time allowed to remain uncut at schools, fell over their shoulders."

Smith, who was born in Marylebone,



tells a good story of a consultation of physicians overheard by a boy at Mr. Fountayne's school, when a young gentleman boarder was seriously indisposed. First Doctor: "You look better." Second Doctor: "Yes, sir; I now eat suppers, and wear a double flannel jacket." And so they went on discussing each other's comforts and ailments, till the house apothecary arrived, when he was questioned by them as to what he had given. They then advised him to repeat the doses as often as he thought proper, and so the important and profound consultation ended. In Mr. Fountayne's hall there used to be a parrot, so old that its feathers were only kept on by a flannel jacket, while in very cold weather it wore a scarlet cloth coat. Poll had been so long accustomed to hear the general invitation to strangers who called to inquire after the boarders, that she learnt to relieve her mistress of that ceremony by always uttering, as soon as any one entered the door, "Do pray walk into the parlour and take a glass of wine."

The facetious George Colman, junior, author of *Broad Grins*, was sent to Marylebone School in 1770, preparatory to entering Westminster. He has left excellent caricatures in the Bunbury manner of the old Doctor and Mrs. Fountayne. The quiet, good-natured dominie, who did not overburden his pupils with Latin and Greek, wore a bush wig, while Mrs. Fountayne, a faded fine woman, whose hair had become of a rainbow colour from the injudicious use of infallible dyes, rejecting powder and pomatum, had erected a formidable mesuage or tenement of hair upon the ground plot of her pericranium. As all illustrations of this kind are valuable to the recorder of social history, we subjoin the old wag's description:

"A towering toupee, pulled up all but by the roots, and strained over a cushion on the top of her head, formed the centre of the building; tiers of curls served for the wings, a hanging chignon behind defended her occiput like a buttress, and the whole fabric was kept tight and weather-proof, as with nails and iron cramps, by a quantity of long single and double black pins."

At a certain hour every day the old lady with the rainbow head threw over her attire a thin white linen wrapper, reaching from her throat to her ankles, mounted herself on a high stool near the fireplace, and presided over the boys' dinners, which took place in the old hall of the mansion. On batter-pudding days the boys' friends used

to come to lunch. The three Miss Fountaynes, daughters of the bush wig and the rainbow head, then enlivened the family conversazione with music and conversation. The eldest sister was a little curvilinear in form. Diana, the prettiest, married a Mr. Hargrave, at the Chancery bar, an unraveller of the knots of the famous The-lusson case. It was a law of the school to talk in French, and the result was a Marylebone patois, that even the ruddy, thick-set Yorkshire footman indulged in. When relations came for a boy, the visit was always announced by this flower of the West Riding, who, thrusting his head into the school-room, bawled out:

"Measter Colman venny shurshay!"

The immortal Marylebone Volunteers of 1797 were eight hundred in number. The uniform consisted of a blue jacket, turned up with red, and blue pantaloons. The arms were kept in the workhouse; the parade ground was in George-street. The corps of Blue Bottles, as they were called, was disbanded in 1801.

In 1802, on the renewed fears of invasion, a new regiment—one thousand strong—was organised, and called the Royal York Saint Mary-le-Bone Volunteers, in compliment to the Duke of York, who resided in the parish. The uniform was a scarlet jacket trimmed with gold lace, and blue pantaloons. Nearly twenty thousand pounds had been expended on this regiment, which was composed chiefly of master tradesmen, and officered by gentlemen. The corps broke up in 1814, when seven hundred pounds—the remains of the regimental fund—were divided between the parish school and Middlesex Hospital. There is still extant a comic song describing the achievements of this gallant corps in the field. It narrates the transport of the volunteers in four horse cars to Hounslow, and the luckless misadventure of the captain, who was shot in the leg by one of his own Light Bobs.

The church of Tyburn in the reign of King John was an appanage of the priory of St. Laurence, at Blakemore, in Essex. In 1525, this priory was suppressed by Wolsey, in order to endow his college at Ipswich. On the cardinal's fall it passed to the king, and finally came into the hands of the Fossett family. In 1821, the government gave the Duke of Portland, for the presentation, land near Welbeck of the value of forty thousand pounds. In the year 1511, the minister of Marylebone received a salary of only thirteen shillings

per annum. In 1650, the minister was paid fifteen pounds per annum.

Thomas Swadlin, D.D., minister of this church, and also of St. Botolph's, Aldgate, during the Civil Wars, was a most eloquent preacher, and in consequence was imprisoned, his living was sequestered, his house plundered, and his wife and children were turned out of doors. The expelled minister lived by trading about the suburbs of London, till on the Restoration he was reinstated.

In 1723-4, Mr. Ford, curate of Marylebone, is said on a certain Sunday to have performed the following duty. He married six couples, performed two full services, churching six women, christened thirty-two children, buried thirteen corpses, and read district service over each. To crown all other absurdities and paganisms in old Marylebone Church, there was an arched opening in the centre of the organ, which contained a canvas transparency, copied by Mr. West from one of his own windows in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and for which flimsy copy he had actually the remarkable self-confidence to charge eight hundred pounds. The parish historian does not forget to mention that, in this picture of the Angels appearing to the Shepherds, one favoured angel was especially conspicuous for having the face of a child, and the thighs of a giant. On both sides of the remarkable organ there were private boxes (called by courtesy pews) which were fitted with chairs and fireplaces. The pulpit and desk were vast pompous piles of carved mahogany. The church seats accommodated between three and four thousand persons. The first parish clerk was a poor knight of Windsor, appointed by the Duke of Portland. There is a tablet in the north wall, dated 1821, to Richard Cosway, the miniature-painter, who was originally an errand-boy at a drawing school in the Strand.

The very close and select vestry of Marylebone was attacked by the Examiner in 1828 and 1829. The chairman was Sir Thomas Baring, and one of the body was Colonel Graham, of the famous house of Fauntleroy and Company, Berners-street. It was complained that they had paid three hundred pounds to Rossi for a bas-relief for the pediment of the new church, which was never used. Also that they had removed a gilt figure of an angel playing a lyre from the organ, and substituted a crown on a cushion. The upholsterer's bill for dressing the church amounted to two

thousand one hundred and fifty pounds. There was a deficiency of twenty-one thousand pounds in the accounts, making an error altogether of forty-seven thousand pounds. The parish was in debt nearly five hundred thousand pounds, when the bill to regulate the vestry went into parliament; the expenses of one grand perambulatory dinner alone amounted to four hundred and eighty-two pounds (the wine costing one hundred and twenty-one pounds, and the ribbons for cockades twenty-three pounds sixteen shillings and sixpence).

In 1774, houses in High-street, Marylebone, particularly on the west side, continued to be inhabited by families who kept their coaches, and who considered themselves as living in the country. As late as the year 1728, the *Daily Journal*, October the 15th, announces, first, that "many persons had arrived in London from their country house in Marylebone;" and, secondly, "that the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole comes to town this day from Chelsea." In 1774, the south and east ends of Queen Anne and Marylebone-streets were unbuilt, and the space consisted only of green fields to the west corner of Tottenham Court-road, and thence to the extreme of High-street, Marylebone Gardens, Marylebone Basin, and another pond called Cockney Ladle. The Rose of Normandy, a public-house on the east side of the High-street of Marylebone, is supposed to be two hundred years old. It was formerly a detached house with a bowling-green at the back. In 1659, it is described as surrounded with a brick wall and fruit-trees, and being two hundred and four paces long. The bowling-green, one hundred and twelve paces one way, three hundred and eighty-eight another, was double set with fine quickset hedges, cut into battlements. The entrance to the house was by descending steps, as the street had been raised. The house, till lately, preserved its original form; the staircase was old. Williams's Farm stood about a quarter of a mile south. It boasted a room with some stained glass in the windows, and called "Queen Elizabeth's kitchen." Returning and recrossing the New-road, after passing the back of Marylebone Gardens, you came to the north side of Cavendish-square, then enclosed by a dwarf brick wall and a heavy wooden railing. Harley Fields was where Whitfield preached: Kendall's Farm, where Mr. J. T. Smith describes seeing eight or ten immense hay-ricks in a row, stood on

the site of part of Osnaburgh-street, nearly opposite the Green Man, originally called the Farthing Pie House.

## THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

### CHAPTER XXXVI. PAUL AT CAMLOUGH.

SUMMER was very lovely at Camlough; bowery foliage clothed the mountain-sides with softness, and in the hollow the swards were brilliant with flowers; the castle gleamed out of a mantle of flowering bloom, and terraces girdled it with garlands as of fire caught from the sun. The gardens were hived with sweets, the trees heavy with perfumes that crept up into their boughs. The birds sang in chorus, the sea made a delicate music, and the peaks of the upper mountains crowned the valley with a sapphire crown.

Sir John had ceased to be uneasy about his unruly daughter. His head was full of things more important. He knew she was safe, and that the best way to manage her was to let her have her own way. But the mother could not so easily content herself; had grown more wretched every day that her child stayed away from her, could not sleep at night nor rest by day. Her daughter's indifference was eating away her life. There was no peace about Lady Archbold; her dark hollow eyes still glowed with restless passion; but her haughtiness had broken up into querulousness. She was too feverish for occupation, and always at odds with Time for not quickening his lagging steps. She did not care for reading, for there was no story so interesting or so pitiful to her as her own. She looked into her past life by that envious and fitful light which such minds will fling backward upon joys from which they scorned to draw much sweetness while they lived. Why had the world failed her, having for so many years been her slave? Why had pride ceased to charm, and the only love she coveted been denied her? Why had poverty threatened to pinch her with unknown wants, while bitterness and reproach must be her only solace in the trial? These were the hard problems which Lady Archbold had got to solve.

She walked with weakly steps about her room, but nobody had any idea that her life was nearly spent. Partly deceived by pride that would not complain, partly by rouge and pearl-powder, Sir John had no

suspicion of the intensity of her suffering, or of the havoc it had made. On every one of these summer days her maid dressed her with infinite pains, arranging laces and satins, flowers and jewellery, as carefully as if her mistress had been a young belle going to court for the first time. On her face there were the red and white that simulated health, and her hair was not suffered to lose the rare blue-black for which the tresses of Lady Archbold had been famed. She thought that when her child returned she should not see the changes which grief and disease had wrought upon her mother. Every day the poor lady sat in a chair filled with cushions, which was placed on the sward at a sunny side of the terrace, a lap-dog on her knees which she did not caress, by her side books which she never opened, fancy-work untouched, and a heap of fresh roses which she crushed to an early death in her hot fingers. Here she sat, watching for one who would not come, and here she still sat when Katherine at length appeared riding out of the distance with Paul by her side. The mother could not bear the sight which she had so passionately longed to see. She fainted in her chair, and had to be carried to her room.

Sir John was right glad to welcome Paul. In his economic fit he had lately denied himself the pleasures of hospitality, being a man who could not choose to invite his friends to bear him company, unless he surprised them with the most costly entertainments. But he was now thoroughly tired of loneliness at Camlough, and pleased to see a man coming to share it. He had heard something of Paul, and felt an interest in him; thought him a fine young fellow, who would be a pleasant kind of neighbour, and likely to work some changes which were needed in the country.

For the first few hours after his arrival, Paul was in high spirits, and won golden opinions from Sir John. He was pleased with all he saw, pleased to get rid of Katherine, and to know that to-morrow he should return without her to Monasterlea. Above all else he was glad to find himself happy. Miss Archbold played hostess, as her mother was not well enough to appear. Her father praised her looks, declaring that the air of Monasterlea had done her good; did not reproach her, or remark in any way upon the manner in which she had chosen to leave her home. The only thing that clouded Sir John's enjoyment was

Paul's determination to return the next day whence he had come. No persuasion would induce him to think of remaining longer than this one night. The master of Camlough was vexed at his obstinacy, but Katherine said carelessly to her father as she left the dinner-table: "Oh, do not trouble about it; believe me he will stay!"

After dinner, Katherine, her father, and Paul set out for a ride about the estate in the long soft light of the early summer evening, so that Paul might make the most of the few hours at Camlough. The excursion was a pleasant one, till on their returning homeward in the dusk, a wild-looking man flung himself suddenly before Paul's horse, throwing up his arms and uttering curses upon the whole race of the Finistons. Paul, always sensitive to the feelings of the poor towards himself, started with a great shock, and urged on his horse past this evil-wisher, who seemed to have started out of the furze-bushes to banish his contentment. Sir John lingered behind, and after some parleying with the wayfarer, rode after his visitor, and rejoined him with a grave countenance.

"I am sorry to hear this," he said; "I have learned from the man that Simon Finiston is evicting the people."

"Is evicting?" asked Paul, in amazement.

"Yes. This very day; the man says so. His own wife and children are among a hundred who have been turned out, without notice, upon the hills. He was working elsewhere, and has been running all day on his way to Tobereevil. This is bad indeed. I had hoped you might have had influence to prevent such iniquities."

Now this was many weeks before the real evictions took place at Tobereevil; but here was one of the many occasions on which rumour declares that a thing has actually occurred long before it is possible that it can have happened. A whisper of Simon's intention had blown over the mountains, and taken the shape of the tragic story which Sir John now told to Paul.

A dark flush overspread the young man's face, and his head sunk on his breast. He seemed stunned by this news, the truth of which he never thought of doubting, and did not speak again until they arrived at the castle door. By that time the stunned feeling had left him, and his mind was in a flame. This iniquity had been done under his very eyes, and he had not seen it. He had been warned, and had

not striven against the danger. His weakness in temporising with the miser at that last interview now appeared to him as a crime of the darkest hue. His cowardice had wrought the evil, and the sin was on his head.

Not all Sir John's polite efforts, not all Katherine's fascinating attentions, could restore to Paul the good spirits which he had enjoyed only an hour ago. He said good-night to his entertainers while it was yet early, and retired to the chamber which was prepared for him. When there, however, he did not go to rest, but walked feverishly about the room, thinking on his own weakness and on the sad case of the poor, and loading himself with the bitterest reproaches. When at last he flung himself on his bed he was ill in mind and body; and when morning came the guest was found unable to leave his room.

Thus began a fever which wasted Paul's strength for two or three weeks. Katherine was in great dismay, so much so that her father was surprised in a great degree, never having seen her show feeling for any one before. His concern as to the sick man was increased by this anxiety of his daughter. He agreed to all her arrangements, sent for the country doctor who attended to his own gout, and who lived on the western side of the Golden Mountain, inviting this gentleman to spend a fortnight at the castle. To the servants and outdoor retainers it was merely said that the guest had got a cold. This was Katherine's wish, so Sir John made a point of it, though he could not understand it; and every care was taken to prevent a rumour of serious illness getting abroad. Katherine's old nurse sat by Paul's bedside night and day, and Katherine herself often stole in and sat motionless behind the curtains, with looks so pale and distracted that no one could have any doubt but that the patient's life was at least as dear to her as her own. And it was understood that Miss Archbold was engaged to Mr. Finiston.

At last, after much suffering, Paul was able to rise from his bed. He was very weak in body and mind, but this was to be expected for a time. Sir John gave him his arm as he walked up and down the lawn, and Katherine waited on him with dainties. But as the invigorating days of early summer passed over his head, and his body became strengthened, it was found very strangely that his mind did not regain its natural balance. His memory was a blank, his thoughts could not fix themselves on



anything for more than an instant. It was some time before Sir John could persuade himself that this failure of mental powers was so complete and unvarying as it proved itself to be. There were moments when Paul seemed dimly conscious of an extraordinary change within himself, and struggled to shake off the cloud which had settled on his brain, to remember whence he had come, and how he had brought himself to Camlough. But as days went by even this slight effort became too much for him. The past dropped away from him and left him at least in peace. He was placid and calm, sometimes silent for long hours; sometimes talking with curious simplicity of the things around him. He shrank from society, spending his time roving aimlessly through the hills and little glens, or losing himself among the high green walls of the beech alleys. Lady Archbold, who had recovered from the attack of illness which joy had brought upon her, pronounced Paul a simpleton, and wondered why Katherine had brought him to the place; but Sir John rebuked her for so rash a judgment.

"You do not understand, my dear. He came here as intelligent a young man as could be found. This is only the effect of illness, and will pass away. For Katherine's sake we must be patient with him."

Lady Archbold refused to believe in the engagement. She did not wonder that Katherine should have bewitched him away from May, but she looked on Paul as a beggar as well as a simpleton. Sir John considered that it was time to change her mind, and took her to walk with him down the terraces in the glow of the setting sun, while two peacocks strutted behind them with their magnificent tails spread.

"Do you not notice how Katherine is altered?" said Sir John. "Her heart is engaged at last, and for that we must be thankful. A worthy affection will make her all that we can desire."

"I had no idea you were so exceedingly unworldly," answered his wife.

"I do not pretend to be altogether unworldly. I could not afford it now. But this thing is fortunate from a worldly point of view."

"Fortunate!"

"My love, do not publish our conversation. I know a good deal of the history of Tobereevil. Its owners have been hoarding treasure for over three hundred years. They have spent literally nothing.

Paul Finiston is the heir—in a short time will be master; and he seems quite untainted by the besetting sin of his family. I predict a noble career for him, and I cannot but think it happy that my fortunes should be linked with his. I have not gone to seek him, nor forced my daughter's fancy. She has had her own way, as I have always allowed her to have it. If the result is satisfactory you are not to call me worldly."

After this Lady Archbold no longer called Paul a simpleton, but became anxious to see his virtues and to behold his mind restored to health; the welfare of Katherine being, as usual, her only care. Nevertheless Paul did not grow wiser nor less fantastic in his ways. He would pass hour after hour picking pebbles from the rocks and flinging them into the sea. He would sit high up in the hills, and hold converse with the sheep. The herds were half afraid of him, though they liked him, for besides his singing to the sheep they often heard him declaiming to the mountains; with head thrown back, and arms folded on his breast, addressing the unconscious cliffs in lofty language. Whilst he rambled about in this way Katherine was often seen hovering at a little distance. She followed him about like a nurse trying to guard a refractory child of whom she has some dread. She scarcely ever lost sight of, but seldom ventured to approach him. Her face had grown very white, and lost a great deal of its beauty, and her eyes had got a strangely timorous look. The people talked quite openly about Miss Archbold's engagement to a fool. She had been over hard to please, and now her heart was set on an idiot. It was wonderful to see her so meek, so absorbed in her care of one person, being never angry now, except when she heard whispers about her fool. Then she would fly into such a fury that every one fled from before her face.

When many weeks had gone past, the parents of Katherine consulted as to what steps ought to be taken in Paul's case. The doctor prescribed amusement and excitement; so the heads of the people at Camlough began to devise plans for the diversion of this demented young man.

Things were just in this state when Bid arrived at Camlough, with her basket on her arm. She hoped to tempt the maids to buy of her wares; at all events her merchandise was to be the excuse for her appearance, and coming over the lower hills that sloped towards the castle it

chanced that she met Paul face to face. She curtsied to him and nodded at him, but he never gave her a glance. The change in his looks struck fear to the heart of his simple friend.

"Misther Paul!" said Bid, following him, "don't you remember me?"

He stopped and gazed at her, and shook his head. "I never saw you before," he said, and walked on with his head drooped on his breast.

"Oh, Heavens! what is this!" cried Bid.

"Misther Paul!" she said, following him again, "I seen Miss May yesterday. You never forgot yer own Miss May?"

Paul turned and stared at her again, with the same blank look in his eyes. "I don't know what you mean," he said.

"Oh mother o' God! have you forgot her!" cried Bid; but Paul noticed her no more, only walked on and left her, and the old woman sat down on the heather and wept till her eyes were sore.

A milkmaid was coming over the hills with her milk-pail on her head. She stopped and looked at Bid, and asked her why she was crying. Poor Bid was too sorrowful too think of anything but the truth.

"I met Mister Paul," she said, "an' not a bit he knewn me."

"Wirra whisht, ould woman, don't you know that the man is mad?"

Now, indeed, it was Bid's turn to question; but for May's sake she remembered that she must be wise. She accepted the milkmaid's invitation to the castle, and sold a pair of blue glass ear-rings on the spot. She was brought into the kitchen, and afterwards had an invitation to the housekeeper's private room, where she disposed of all her jewellery, and was hospitably entertained. When she started to return homewards she had learned all that could be learned as to Paul's unhappy state.

As she came homeward over the mountains her head was dizzy with grief. Paul Finiston mad! How could she carry such news to May. The hope of the country was gone on the wind, but for the moment she thought May's the hardest share of the trouble.

"She'll break her bit o' a heart," said Bid. "She'll turn to the wall an' die."

When the old woman came to the end of her weary journey, and walked up the garden path, she saw the blinds were still down in the cottage at Monasterlea, and

she knew that May was no better than when she had left her. So Bid crept round to the back door as before, and stepped noiselessly into the kitchen. This time Bridget had no need to put her finger on her lip, for Bid's spirits were so crushed that she was as quiet as a ghost. Miss Martha came to her presently and sent her into May's chamber.

Poor Bid had little art to break her terrible news. She told it out bluntly, in a burst of sympathetic sorrow.

"Oh, my dear," she said, "there's little use in goin' to look for Paul. He's strayin' about yon hills like a lamb that's lost its mother. He doesn't know you nor me, nor e'er a wan belongin' till him. They say he's promised in marriage to yon bould cruel hussy that took him away wid her out o' here, an' she walkin' about afther him like a cat afther a mouse. But a woman might as well marry hersel' till our poor Con at home. God sees it's the black word to come out o' my mouth to yer ear, but our cliver gintleman has no more sinse left nor a fool."

May sat up in her bed, devouring every word that fell from Bid. The old woman glanced at her fearfully, as if she feared the news would kill her on the spot.

"I knew it," said May, quietly. "I knew it was not his own will that did it. Now, Bid, I'll get well. Open that window wide, and bring me something to eat."

Bid stared at her vacantly.

"Oh, Bid dear, don't loiter. Hurry, and do what I tell you, for I have no time to lose."

Bid did as she was told, putting her wonder aside to wait for another time. She opened the window wide, and the river and the flowers looked in at May. She trotted away to the kitchen and came back with a basin of soup. Greatly amazed was Miss Martha to find May sitting up in her bed, and Bid holding a basin of soup to her mouth.

Miss Martha was very busy at this time. It was the hay-making season, and she had got to look after her labourers. So Bid stayed with May; she sat by her bedside during the long summer day, telling her stories of the pleasant summer world out of doors. She talked, just as if she had got a sick child to nurse, of how the river was laughing on the stones because the sun was trying to dry it up; but the source in the mountains was too plentiful for that. How the cock was scolding his wives because the chickens were long about

walking, and the young ducks were gone off in search of water to have a swim. Nothing sad did Bid tell to May, but every tale had life in it, and a sparkle of fun and joy.

The next evening Miss Martha found May up and dressed, and sitting at the open window.

"You see I have got well, Aunt," said the girl. "We have a great deal to do, and I can't afford to be sick."

"Thank God you are better, my darling; but what have we got to do?"

"In the first place there are all these people who are to be driven out of their homes. We must try and do something for them. There will be sick people amongst them."

Miss Martha looked grave. "I am ready to do what I can," she said. "I cannot do very much."

"Bid has gone to the mountain," said May, "to see how things are going. She will be back here in the morning with the news. And, Aunt, there is another thing—you and I have got to save Paul Finiston."

"Now, my love, forgive me, but I will not hear a word about that graceless young man. A person who behaves as he has done is never worth a thought. When your health is a little stronger, my darling, you will regain a proper spirit. Till then have patience, and do not mention the man's name."

May's face had become as white as the mountain snow. She caught the arms of her chair, and held them tightly. Some minutes passed before she spoke again.

"Aunt Martha," she then said, "you have not understood me. I will explain myself better, and you will not refuse to listen to me. Paul Finiston has lost his mind, and he is in the power of an enemy. I feel that he will never recover, never be the man God intended him to be, while he is here in this country, under the shadow of the curse which he has so feared. If he were away in some bright new country the trouble would leave him, and he might there live his life as he ought to live it. Don't believe I wish for him here that I may hear his voice and see his face, for I am a truer woman than you think me. What I ask is this—do you take Paul to France, or to Italy if you like better, and place him with good people, and leave him there to God. I will manage here during your absence, and will be happy, feeling we have tried to save him. Now you know what I mean, Aunt. Will you do

this thing for the sake of your little May?"

Miss Martha jerked a tear or two out of her eye. She was impatient with herself for not feeling sterner.

"That is all very fine," she said; "but how am I to take possession of an able-bodied young man? Am I to ride to Camlough and carry him off in my pocket?"

May had no longer any smiles for her aunt's fidgety little speeches. Her eyes gazed strangely out of the window, with that fixed bleak look which they had taken when Paul was expected and did not come, like eyes that had given up seeking for the thing that could give them joy.

"I do not know how that will be," she said; "I do not know yet."

She closed her eyes, and Miss Martha thought she slept; but she was pondering all the time over that difficult problem—how could Paul be carried out of the country and saved? She had no doubt at all that his present state was directly owing to the influence of the curse. Anxiety must have caused that sudden and mysterious illness which had left his mind a wreck. She thought of him happy and light-hearted as she had first seen him. Had he stayed in that foreign country to which an honest impulse had driven him, he would not now stand blighted in his prime. It was she who had brought him into danger, she who had kept him under the cloud, and now she must send him away from her, so that his troubles might come to an end. It was only a poor comfort for her to know that he had already forgotten her, so that it would cost him no pang if he were never to see her again. Of her own future she did not dare to think.

Miss Martha's thoughts on the subject were very different. The old lady did not quite believe in the story of Paul's loss of memory, and suspected that Katherine had bewitched him, and that he had chosen to stay at Camlough. She had not, however, the heart to thrust such opinion upon May. If the child believed him mad, why let her believe so.

Meanwhile Bid had arrived at home on the eve of a day of affliction. People were passing from one cabin to another, saying sad farewells, and mourning together over the woe that was come among them. The Kearneys were carrying their small possessions into a cave under a cliff, where they intended to live till they could sell their pig and their little bits of furniture. With

the few pounds that such sale would bring they must start by-and-bye, a sad and timid band of wanderers, to seek their fortunes or misfortunes in some unknown and dreaded town. Some others were doing likewise, thanking God as they worked, that things were not worse with them.

"Sure it's the summer sky we have over our heads," said one. "If a body must sleep on the grass, it's good to have it dhry."

"You say well," said another; "we're better off nor the old people—heavens be their bed! What debate could me an' the baby make if the snow was blindin' our eyes and freezin' our hearts."

"The Lord wouldn't let that happen twicet," said a third.

But there were others who could not make an effort to be cheerful; the people who had their sick and their dying to provide for. What could Tim's old father, and little Bride's crippled grandmother do but die on the side of the hill? There was patient Norah in the last stage of consumption, and there was a mother of many children who had been bedridden for years. The children clung to their mother, who could not move, and moaned over the horror which the morrow was to bring to them; and the woman with the sick daughter sat with her arms round her dying child, and prayed with frantic earnestness that God would take her home before the cruel hour should come. Sympathising sufferers passed in and out of the cabins, and wept a little with one, and wept a little with another; while each would rebuke her neighbour for the despair which she felt herself.

Bundles were packed, and Sunday clothes put on. In most cases where there was a strong healthy father or brother, he had gone away already to look for work in the nearest town, or in some other part of the country. Those who were to begin their journey to-morrow, were all the weak, if not the helpless. People were dressed already for their travel, for there was no thought of sleeping on that last ever-to-be-remembered night before they left the homes that had sheltered them, never to see them more. They kept walking about,

visiting each other, all the short summer night, sitting round the fires for the few dark chill hours talking over their past, or trying to predict the future. Con sat by the fire in the Kearneys' cabin, his face dark with gloom, his hands clasping his knees under his chin, his eyes roving from the red hearth to Nan, and from Nan back to the hearth. The girl was busy meanwhile making jackets for the little brothers, and cloaks for the small half-naked sisters out of every rag of stuff she could find, including the bed-clothes. The little ones sat round her, awed into unusual hush, and watching every stitch with the eyes of frightened rabbits.

"God help ye!" said a visiting neighbour, "but ye're the long wake family!"

Nan threw her head back, and stifled a groan.

"Misther Paul! Misther Paul!" she said, "thin why did you desave us?"

"Arrah whisht!" said the neighbour; "could he carcumvint the devil?"

"Mick! the daylight's comin'. Will you run an' thry if you see a sight o' Bid?"

The neighbour went out sighing.

"Well, well, well! but the obstinate hope is in that girl!"

"She ought to ha' come back," said Nan; "she ought to ha' come back."

Here Bid and the house-mother entered the cabin together. The old woman had been detained, condoling and helping in many houses on her way.

"Well!" cried Nan, springing to her feet, and dropping her work.

"The curse is down on Paul," said Bid, solemnly; "ye have ne'er a wan to look to but the Lord!"

Nan crouched on the floor and buried her face in her gown.

"Get up girl, get up! There's worse off nor you. Ye've all got yer feet undher ye, an' young blood in yer veins."

"Young enough!" wailed Nan, as a toddling child tumbled into her lap.

"Ye'll make yer mother break down," said Bid; "I looked for better things from ye. Ye haven't the sick an' dyin' to take on yer shoulders. Get up now an' be a woman, Nan Kearney. An' I'll show ye Katty Daly, that can't stir, an' her seven little girsheens all cryin' round her bed."

END OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

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# SLAVES OF THE LAMP.

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

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### THE LAMP AND ITS SLAVES.

AFTER depositing one passenger, the train went writhing out of the station; the serpentine motion and the red lamp together suggesting the idea of an enormous glowworm. The man who had alighted, who had been awakened from a doze, and was still half asleep, stood staring after it until the porter, the one other living being in the place, touched him on the arm and asked him for his ticket.

"Here it is," said the passenger, producing it. "Now where is the man?"

"What man?" asked the porter, gruffly, raising his lantern to get a better view of the stranger, and eyeing him suspiciously.

The light fell upon a tall, middle-aged man, wrapped from head to foot in a thick great-coat, and carrying a travelling-rug in one hand and a bag in the other.

"The man from Meneage," he said, shortly. "I telegraphed this morning to Mr. Stacey that I was coming down by this train, and I expected he would have sent a trap to meet me."

"Oh, you are Mr. Cameron, then?" said the porter. "Telegraph came all right, sir, but there weren't nobody to take it up to Squire Stacey; and it's plain you're strange to these parts, or you wouldn't talk about traps coming from Meneage this time of year. River's out now, sir, and there's no way of getting to Meneage but by boat."

"Do you mean to say my message didn't go to Mr. Stacey?"

"Not it," said the porter, quietly. "It's locked up in station-master's desk, that's where that is! Most of the Bridgefoot men have gone out in the fishing-smacks, and there's only two boatmen left in the

place, and they were both away time your message arrived."

"But I must get to Meneage to-night," said Mr. Cameron, "if I row myself there!"

"No call for you to do that, sir," said the porter; "one of the boatmen's sure to be back by this time, and he won't mind the job if he's well paid for it, though it's rather a roughish night. We will go and try and find old Bowes. Give me your bag, sir, and come along a me."

They crossed the line, and went out into an open road, bordered on either side by pretty villas, summer residences of the rich Avonmouth tradesmen. From the eminence on which they stood they saw, climbing the cliff beneath them, the little white-washed cottages of the fishing-village perched in clumps of two and three, one above the other, until they were finally intermingled with the stone houses and the slated roofs of the business portion of the town. Above their heads were traceable the vast yet delicate proportions of that great triumph of engineering skill, the bridge from which the village takes its name, while the fitful gleams of moonlight, which from time to time struggled through the dark bank of clouds, showed the dull outline of some old three-deckers, notable ships in their day, but long since abandoned to the dry-rot and the rats.

"We are getting near the place now, sir," said the porter, as they wound down what was little better than a narrow stone ladder between the houses. "This is where our fishing people mostly live."

"So my nose informs me," said Mr. Cameron, dryly.

The porter looked at him and grinned.

"Tell 'ee that's nothing to Penzance fish-trucks in herring or pilchard season; 'tain't nice, perhaps, but it's main wholesome, I reckon, though some of 'em seems to think that 'tis better to keep the taste well washed out of their mouths. Tom Bowes is one of that sort; and here we are at his place. Hallo, Tom! Tom Bowes! rouse 'un out, Tom; here's a gentleman wants yer."

The porter stopped before a low, dingy hovel, with a thatched roof, and a tiny window, the little light procurable from which was, however, obscured by a thick glass bottle of dirty, clumsy-looking sweet-meats, and a couple of large-bowled clay pipes with crossed stems. As the man raised his lantern to the door, the light fell upon a half-effaced inscription setting forth that the shop owner was duly licensed to sell groceries, &c. "Ah, that was in his wife's lifetime, sir," said the porter, pointing to the words. "She were a hard-working woman, always trying to keep him straight, but since her death, whatever time Tom's not in the boat, he's down at the Trawling Net, or asleep here."

"Perhaps he's at the Trawling Net, now?" said Mr. Cameron. "He don't appear to hear us."

"Trawling Net's shut long since," said the porter. "I'll soon rouse 'un out, I tell 'ee. Do 'ee just kick at door while I shout, sir!"

After a series of combined kicks and roars, the door opened, and Mr. Bowes stood before them, dressed in thick trousers and a frowsy yellow shirt. He was a heavily-built, ill-looking man of about fifty, with his coarse sandy hair brought down after the old sailor fashion in a curl or love-lock on either side of his broad square forehead, with a mass of tangled beard and whiskers, and with a shifty, furtive glance in the small grey eyes which were deeply sunken in his head.

"What's this!" he cried, in a dull thick voice, stepping a pace back and raising his hand to shade his face from the glare of the porter's lamp. "What's this!" he repeated, lurching heavily forward and clinging to the door for support.

"A job, Tom, that's what this is!" said the porter. "A job!"

"Job be——," said Mr. Bowes, savagely. "Go and ring thy old bell at station, and leave I to sleep."

"Gentleman wants to go to Meneage, Tom."

"What's he to do to Meneage?" asked Bowes. "'Tain't the colonel or Mr. Arthur. He isn't to home to Meneage."

"Never you mind what I want at Meneage, my man," said Mr. Cameron, stepping forward; "I want you to take me there, and I will pay you well."

"So yer need," said Bowes, sullenly; "a man should be well paid to pull up to Meneage at such a time a night, and in such weather."

"Weather isn't so bad for November," said the porter.

"It'll be bad enough for December and February shuttled up together, before morning, Harry," said Bowes, looking up at the sky. "There will be a fine fight 'twixt wind and rain in an hour's time."

"Then the sooner we're off the better," said Mr. Cameron. "Good-night, my friend," he added, turning to the porter, "and thanks for the trouble you have taken."

The porter knuckled his forehead as he pocketed his gratuity, and took advantage of Bowes's momentary absence to whisper, pointing to the inside of the cottage, "Don't fear 'un, sir."

"Fear!" echoed Mr. Cameron.

"I mean don't mind 'un; he's a little heavy wi' liquor now, and when so, he's apt to be foul-mouthed and blows a little about himself and so on. He's the best boatman in Bridgefoot, and drunk or sober never met with an accident yet."

"Let's trust his usual luck will not forsake him to-night," said Mr. Cameron. "Here he is. Now again, good-night."

And the porter touched his cap and started off, as Bowes reappeared, bearing on his shoulder a pair of sculls and sprit and sail. He had put on the usual fisherman's knitted blue jersey, and carried a yellow oil-skin coat over his arm.

Bowes locked the door behind him, put the key in his pocket, and beckoning Mr. Cameron to follow him, strode down the steps toward the pier. The steamers which take the summer tourists such pleasant excursions had long since been laid up in dock; and in the little creek lying under the lee of the old pier, and sheltered thereby from wind and tide, which in the season is filled with gaily painted craft, were only two boats, each rough, strong, and serviceable. Into one of these boats Bowes threw the gear with which he was laden, and then lowered himself; loosened the rope from the ring which held the boat to the pier side, and, hand over hand, gradually worked her along until she reached the bottom of the small flight of steps.

"Down here," growled Bowes, looking up at his companion; "mind they steps; they be soaked slippery with the slime and

washing of the tide. That's it—go aft now. You're pretty used to this kind of thing I reckon," he added, as Mr. Cameron, passing him lightly, picked up the rudder from the bottom of the boat, and bending with it over the stern, shipped it easily.

"Yes," said Mr. Cameron, with a short laugh, "I have been in a boat before."

"So have I," said Bowes, pulling the boat's head round, and settling down to his work. "I served on board the Vectis at the China war."

"Ah, I remember the Vectis," said Mr. Cameron. "She was commissioned at Avonmouth, and was full of Bridgefoot men."

"I'm no Bridgefoot man."

"Indeed," said Mr. Cameron, who had wrapped himself in his rug, and lit his pipe. "Where do you hail from then?"

"From Tremadoc, the other side of Verran's Head."

"The deuce you do. I know it well."

"Ah, so does him you're going to visit, Mr. Arthur Stacey, him as lives up in the house there. He's going to be married he is."

"How do you know that?"

"Same way as any other fool; there's no one as hasn't heard that Mr. Arthur's going to be married to Miss Tregenna. It's to be a grand wedding they say; the old squire's mad with joy, and the colonel's coming down from London—keep her starboard, sir. Ha, ha! fancy Mr. Arthur going to be married!"

"It seems to afford you a great deal of amusement," said Mr. Cameron.

"It du, it du, there is nothing I've heard of for many a year I reckon as has made me laugh so much—now, sir, port your helm sharp, and run her on to that spit."

Two minutes after, the boat had run aground, and Bowes had leaped out and was holding her by the painter.

"Safe so far," said Mr. Cameron, as he stood on the strand.

"Ay, so fur," said Bowes, grimly.

"There's your money, my man," said Mr. Cameron. "If you make her fast to that stake she'll be safe enough, and you can walk up with me to the house and have a drink of cider, or what you like."

"Not I," said Bowes, shoving the boat off, and springing into her as she floated; "not a bite nor a sup would I take under Arthur Stacey's roof. I'd deserve to be choked if I did."

"As you please," said Cameron. "You're a queer customer, Mr. Bowes."

"May be," returned Bowes, "may be

Arthur Stacey'll find that out before long. Wish him luck from me on his marriage, ha, ha!" And he bent himself to his sculls and went sweeping away with the tide.

Mr. Cameron looked after him for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders, and made the best of his way to the white wicket-gate he saw before him. Passing through it, he found himself on a narrow gravel-path, which led into the broad carriage sweep before the hall-door. Lights were gleaming here and there in the house, and a vigorous application to the bell speedily produced a servant, who told Mr. Cameron the squire had retired, but that Mr. Arthur was still up. The next moment Arthur Stacey appeared in the hall and cordially welcomed the visitor.

"You didn't expect me, Arthur?" said Cameron, when the library door had closed behind them. "I telegraphed this morning that I was coming, but heard at Bridgefoot that the message could not be delivered. I wanted to have a few days' quiet with you before the other wedding guests arrived, and——"

"Thank God you are come, no matter what brought you," said Arthur Stacey. "You are the one man in the world whom I wish to see. I should have telegraphed to you to come to-morrow, if, indeed, I had not run up to London to you."

"What on earth's the matter, man? You seem strangely moved."

"Moved," echoed Stacey, "I have had enough to move me. Stewart," he added, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "I have heard fearful news this afternoon."

"News," cried Stewart Cameron. "What news?"

"The most horrible, the most fatal. Ellen Pollard is alive!"

"Good Heavens," cried Cameron. "Your wife?"

"Yes," groaned Stacey, "my miserable wife."

"My poor dear Arthur. Why it seems ages since she—since she left England."

"It is ten years ago since she ran away from me with a man of her own class to America. It is eight years ago since I received what I imagined to be incontrovertible proof of her death."

"In what shape came the news which you heard to-day?"

"In the form of a letter, written in the scrawl I remember so well, and signed 'Ellen Stacey.' The writer said she had heard of my intended marriage, and——"

"And forbade it?"

"No; then I might have doubted its

authenticity. What it did say was so painfully like her real self as to make me tremble. It had suited her purpose, she said, to make me believe that she was dead. She would remain dead, she said, to me and to the world, on the receipt of a thousand pounds; if I failed to send her that sum by the next mail, to a given address in New York, she would return to England and proclaim herself."

"Was there anything else in the letter?"

"Nothing but some horrible ribaldry about Miss Tregenna and her family."

"Miss Tregenna and her family? How could Ellen have learned any particulars of them? Was she acquainted with any one in these parts?"

"Only with one man; a fellow who is now a boatman in Bridgefoot."

"The man who brought me here to-night, Bowes?"

"The same. He came from Tremadoc, the place where I first met her when I went to read with the rector, and he was a sort of lover of hers before she flew at higher game."

Then Stewart Cameron remembered how Bowes had made merry over Arthur Stacey's impending marriage; but remembering it, he held his peace.

"Oh, Stewart," cried Arthur, in an agony of grief, "not even to you until now have I told what I suffered through that fatal folly! It was bad enough to have to conceal the fact of my marriage from the old people at home, to have to pass my time with a woman who was susceptible of no softness, capable of no improvement, careless of the sacrifice which I had made for her, thinking but of her own self, and of how much could be made out of the silly boy who had succumbed to her temptation. But when I came to see her under the influence of drink, smuggled into the house and taken in secret, holding me up to the derision of those chosen friends whom I had foolishly permitted her to retain, scoffing at my parents and at all that was good and true, I felt that my burden was almost insupportable. She relieved me of it at last by her flight. Then came the news of her death, and I thought I might find some solace for my wasted life by a suitable marriage. But years went by and I saw no one I could care for until, within the last few months, I met Maud Tregenna—Maud Tregenna, who is now lost to me for ever!"

"Nonsense," said Cameron, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "I never saw the Arthur Stacey of old days throw

up the sponge, nor shall he do so now! This matter must be thoroughly sifted!"

"Sifted," echoed Stacey, bitterly. "Where, and by whom?"

"In America, and by me! In my rambling, special-correspondent life, I have seen men and cities, as you know, and there are few places, out of London, with which I am better acquainted than New York. Fifth Avenue drawing-room, lager beer saloons, Bowery boys, bar-keepers, I know them all. This is Wednesday, I can get through by way of Bristol, and arrive in Liverpool on Friday, in good time to sail by the Cunard boat on Saturday morning."

"But Maud—Miss Tregenna. What am I to say to her?"

"Leave that to me. I'll have all our plan of action cut and dried and detailed by to-morrow morning; and now, old man, give me some supper, and let me get to bed, for I am hungry and tired, and shall want a long sleep to clear my brain for thinking out what we have to do."

However much Stewart Cameron might have wanted a long sleep, he certainly did not get it; for Arthur Stacey heard him walking up and down his bedroom long after they had retired, and seemed to have scarcely got to sleep before he was aroused by finding Cameron at his bedside.

"Jump up now, Arthur, throw on your dressing-gown, and clear the cobwebs out of your head, for I have only about ten minutes to talk to you—"

"But how will you—"

"Everything is arranged—your man is getting the boat, and I shall catch the morning mail. Now, first about Miss Tregenna; if you have pluck enough, which I much doubt, you shall go and see her, if not, you must write to her. But in any case she must be told at once that most important business calls you to London, and that your marriage *must* be postponed for at least a fortnight. Now, above all things, speak or write brightly and cheerfully, of course expressing the 'desolation' which you feel at your happiness being deferred, but not giving her the smallest idea of any trouble or difficulty in the matter."

"But am I to go to London?"

"Well no, not to London; I think I have a better place than that. It is perfectly obvious that you must get away from this place. You would worry yourself to death in this solitude, or you would be worried to death by some of the Tregenna people, when they found—as with that extraordinary perverseness which always marks



such things, they would certainly find—that you were remaining here.”

“You are quite right,” said Arthur, quickly. “But where can I go?”

“To see the Slaves of the Lamp, my son.”

“The Slaves of the Lamp! Who are they?”

“Mortals, with almost immortal power; men whose lives are passed in blessing and banning; now establishing a kingdom, now announcing a revolution; a movement of their fingers, and Wall-street wails with panic, or the Bank of England is glutted with gold; wealth, poverty, success, failure, courage, despair; nay, almost life or death are daily distributed by them. In a word, the Lamp gives the light, by the reflected movement of which the messages coming through the Atlantic cable are recorded, and the Slaves are the telegraph clerks!”

“But where are these people, and why should I go to them?”

“Answer, number one. At Valentia, on the west coast of Ireland, in a situation of great wild beauty. Answer, number two. Because the scenery will be all novel to you, and the journey will do you good by distracting your thoughts from your own affairs. Because Mr. Gay, the superintendent, is an intimate friend of mine. I went out there as ‘special’ for the Statesman, to describe the laying of the first cable, and we saw a deal of rough work together in the old Agamemnon. I will give you a letter to him, and guarantee you a welcome from one of the best fellows in the world. And lastly, because you will be there on the spot, in case I want to speak to you across the Atlantic.”

“But how am I to——”

“No time for any more. Here is the letter for Gay. Now give me all the letters you have received from Ellen Pollard since her flight. Two, four, six—this one containing the news of her death, signed by—who is this? Oh, Silas Mumford, Presbyterian clergyman; and this one again, signed by herself, asserting her existence, and claiming hush money.”

“Of course I would have paid the money willingly enough, but——”

“But you were not going to place Miss Tregenna in a false position, and to make a bigamist of yourself, even for the sake of supplying me with the groundwork of a plot for a new novel. By the way, that reminds me. Here is a memorandum of some letters which I have not time to write, and which you must write for me, in my name, at once. One to Morton, States-

man Office, London, saying that business compels me to absent myself for three weeks, but that I hope to be back in time to write the usual leader about the Yule Log, and the Mistletoe, and all the rest of it, for Christmas Eve. One to Gogerty, publisher, Crane-court, London, telling him I have got together all the stuff for Gogerty's Garland, and it looks pretty good. I'll make it up on the voyage out, and send it him by the return mail. One to Mrs. Clugh, laundress, No. 3, Dossetter's-court, Essex-street; telling her to take advantage of my absence to introduce a little soap and water and a scrubbing-brush into my chambers. Now, old fellow, good-bye. Whatever may happen, good or bad, you shall know almost as soon as I know it myself. Within a very few moments of my hearing any news in New York, one of the Slaves of the Lamp shall read it out to you at Valentia. I have given a general idea of your position to Gay, and I know he will pay you every attention. Now, once more, good-bye; if I want you, you must make the best of your way to Queens-town, and come by the next boat.”

Stewart Cameron wrung his friend's hand and was gone.

Stewart Cameron had rightly estimated his friend. Arthur Stacey had not the pluck to see Miss Tregenna, but he wrote her such a letter as Stewart had advised, telling her that the business upon which he was called away was of most vital importance. She could guess what he must feel at having to tear himself away from her at such a time, and he could comprehend what he hoped were her feelings in the matter, but that during their enforced separation, he should never cease to, &c., and he knew that she would never cease to, &c.; in fact, the style of letter which, under such circumstances, has been written from time immemorial, and the popularity of which, from all that can be seen to the contrary, is likely to continue.

Then he further followed Stewart's advice by quitting Meneage at once; but, that step taken, he began to act upon his own ideas. He would go to Valentia, of course, but he did not see any occasion to hurry to his destination. The Cunard steamer, by which, as he saw from the paper, Stewart had sailed, was the Scotia, the fastest of the fleet, but even she must take ten days to arrive at her destination, and then Stewart would have his inquiries to make. So he travelled leisurely to London, and took up his quarters at the Tavistock, in the vain

hope that he might distract his thoughts from the dreary channel in which they never ceased to flow. He had not been a frequent visitor to town since his youthful days, when, like most provincial young men, he knew more of metropolitan amusements and dissipation than most Londoners; but on this occasion he found himself sitting in theatres and supper-rooms, as pre-occupied, and as self-contained, as he had been in his solitude at Meneage, and ever asking himself the constantly recurring question, "What will be the result of Stewart's mission—what future is in store for me?"

He hoped for relief in Dublin, which was a strange city to him, but there the same thoughts and fears eternally haunted him, and would not be laid. Thence, at last, he made his way to Killarney, at that season of the year bleak, blank, and desolate; and thence through the wildest part of Kerry, now winding round the base of mountains, whose tops were enshrouded in purple mist, now crossing narrow stone bridges, under which the storm-swollen rivers ran brown and foaming; now traversing vast tracts of bog-land where the water stood in stagnant pools, and where, here and there, on the bare brown earth from which it had been stripped, the peat lay piled in sods for the winter firing; until he passed through the wretched little town of Cahirciveen, a mile or two beyond which is the ferry connecting the island of Valentia with the mainland.

It was during this portion of his journey that the misery of his position, the horror under which he was suffering on the night of Cameron's arrival, recurred to Arthur Stacey in its fullest force. The savage grandeur of the scenery, the squalor of the mud cabins, the desolate gaunt look of the few human beings he encountered, all had their effect in lowering his spirits and rendering more direful the aspect of the crisis through which he was passing.

He recovered a little when, after a brief interval of rest at the comfortable inn at Valentia, he went over to the handsome block of buildings in which are placed the offices and residences of the Slaves of the Lamp, and was received with great cordiality by their chief. Mr. Gay took Arthur through the building, showing him the handsome hall, where, stowed away for the winter, lay the sails and sculls, the cricket-bats and croquet-mallets, and other implements of summer pastime; the superintendent's own office, filled with scientific works and apparatus; the mess-room, the

dormitory, and finally the darkened sanctum of the Lamp and of its reflecting Mirror.

There they were, and there before them was the Slave. There he sat with his eyes intently fixed on a framed white-paper screen in front of him, on which was received the image of the flame reflected from the mirror; while the movements of this spot of light to the right or left of the centre of the paper screen conveyed to the Slave the letters which, formed into words, were read off by him and taken down by a fellow Slave at his side.

"New York, November the 21st, Cunard S. S. Scotia, arrived this morning at ten A.M.," read the Slave, and Stacey knew that by that time Cameron was at work.

That thought rather intensified than relieved his anxiety. He found himself constantly wondering what steps Cameron would take for the elucidation of the mystery. What he might be doing at that particular time, why Ellen Pollard had sent over to England the news of her death, and how she can have been a gainer by the device. Maud Tregenna, too, Arthur could scarcely bear to think of her! He had, while in London, received a letter from her so full of trust and confidence in him, so mindful of his interests, making so much of any question involving his happiness, and so little of her disappointment and distress at his absence and the postponement of the wedding, that he felt half inclined to despise himself for practising even a necessary deception upon her. He had replied to the letter, telling her that his business called him to Ireland, but that his movements would be so uncertain, liable as he was to be summoned from place to place, that he could not give her any fixed address. He would, however, of course write to her. And he had done so. On the second night after his arrival at Valentia, he sat down in the inn guest-room, a chamber which he thought might in the summer look pretty enough, with its view over the ferry, but which was somewhat chill and gaunt in winter, and wrote to Maud Tregenna, such a letter as during his lifetime he had never written. He was not naturally a man of impulse, or easily moved to warmth of expression; but in this letter he poured out all the wealth of love which he had hoarded during the past, all his hopes for their joint future. It seemed, while he was engaged on it, to be an antidote against the surrounding gloom; but by the next morning its effect was gone, and the reaction setting in rendered him worse than ever.

That night Arthur Stacey thought his senses were about to leave him. As he sat over the smouldering fire, and listened to the roaring of the wind without, he thought it would be almost better to return to Cornwall, and tell Maud Tregenna the whole truth, than prolong the mental agony which he had endured that day. In the morning, as on the other days since his arrival, he had visited the temple of the Lamp, the light of which is never extinguished night or day, and had seen the watchful Slaves at their never-ending task. Then he had gone out to the lighthouse, and through the Knight of Kerry's grounds, and from Bray Head had watched the long Atlantic rollers come thundering shoreward, evidences of the storm that had taken place perhaps a thousand leagues away. Such, at least, Arthur Stacey thought them as he gazed on them from the bleak, barren height, and regarded them as ill-omens of the conflict that was raging on his behalf far away in the West.

He ought to have been tired by his wanderings, but the cosiest bed in the world would scarcely have tempted him to sleep, and he was unwilling to tempt the weary unrest and the tossing to and fro, listening to the wailing of the waves, which he knew awaited him up-stairs. He had looked through every sheet of the thumb-ed and dirty newspapers which lay about the room, and read through all the idiotic scrawl with which the "visitors' book" was bespattered. A torn Black's Guide, and the cover of a work which purported to be "Your Fate Foretold; or, the Norwood Gipsy's Oracle," but the contents of which had apparently cast their skin and vanished, constituted all the literature of the inn.

Arthur thought he would try the traveller's last resource of chatting with the landlord; but the landlord had gone to market at Cahirciveen, and would not be back till late, and he had neither the inclination nor the courage to break in upon the convivial circle, whose boisterous mirth came pealing in from the kitchen. One hope was left him, his servant might have thought to pack some books in the portmanteau. He would go and see.

No, no books, only clothes, and—good Heavens! what is this? The packet of letters concerning Ellen Pollard, which Cameron so particularly desired to take away with him, and without which his inquiries will probably be fruitless? The light in the bedroom was too dim to enable Arthur to convince himself, and he hurried down-stairs with the packet in his hand.

No, they were not the letters! Thank Heaven for that! What were they then? A series of manuscripts of different shapes and size, and evidently in various hands, neatly folded, docketed, and tied together in one general wrapping sheet, on which were the following words pencilled in Cameron's well-known hand:

G.'s G. for 187—.

Two horrors—Burke? Hare? (after "Burke" was written "ill—try Grimmer.")

One ghost—explicable.

One ditto—inexplicable.

Comic verse.

Serious ditto.

One London Life—Streeter.

One Sporting ditto—Knox.

One Rambling Experience—Self.

Query—something Irish—Nugent R.?

"G.'s G.?" said Arthur Stacey to himself, "and manuscripts? These must be the intended contents of the Garland, about which I wrote on Stewart's behalf, and which Stewart fondly imagined he had taken with him to arrange on the voyage. He'll be in a tremendous state of mind about it, but I think his wrath would be mitigated if he knew how opportunely they have come in for my relief. Now, let us see what they are about."

He took up the first paper, and listlessly turned over the leaves for a few moments. Presently, finding the manuscript easier to decipher than he had at first expected, he addressed himself to its perusal in earnest.

### IN THE CONFESSIONAL.

THE things of which I write befel—let me see, some fifteen or eighteen years ago. I was not young then; I am not old now. Perhaps I was about thirty-two; but I do not know my age very exactly, and I cannot be certain to a year or two one way or the other.

My manner of life at that time was desultory and unsettled. I had a sorrow—no matter of what kind—and I took to rambling about Europe; not certainly in the hope of forgetting it, for I had no wish to forget, but because of the restlessness that made one place after another triste and intolerable to me.

It was change of place, however, and not excitement, that I sought. I kept almost entirely aloof from great cities, spas, and beaten tracks, and preferred, for the most part, to explore districts where travellers and foreigners rarely penetrated.

Such a district at that time was the

Upper Rhine. I was traversing it that particular summer for the first time, and on foot, and I had set myself to trace the course of the river from its source in the great Rhine glacier to its fall at Schaffhausen. Having done this, however, I was unwilling to part company with the noble river, so I decided to follow it yet a few miles further—perhaps as far as Mayence, but at all events as far as Basle.

And now began, if not the finest, certainly not the least charming part of my journey. Here, it is true, were neither Alps nor glaciers, nor ruined castles perched on inaccessible crags, but my way lay through a smiling country studded with picturesque hamlets, and beside a bright river hurrying along over swirling rapids, and under the dark arches of antique covered bridges, and between hill-sides garlanded with vines.

It was towards the middle of a long day's walk among such scenes as these, that I came to Rheinfelden, a small place on the left bank of the river, about fourteen miles above Basle.

As I came down the white road in the blinding sunshine, with the vines on either hand, I saw the town lying low on the opposite bank of the Rhine. It was an old walled town, enclosed on the land side, and open to the river, the houses going sheer down to the water's edge, with flights of slimy steps worn smooth by the wash of the current, and overhanging eaves, and little built-out rooms with pent-house roofs, supported from below by jutting piles black with age, and tapestried with water-weeds. The stunted towers of a couple of churches stood up from amid the brown and tawny roofs within the walls. Beyond the town, height above height, stretched a distance of wooded hills. The old covered bridge, divided by a bit of rocky island in the middle of the stream, led from bank to bank—from Germany to Switzerland. The town was in Switzerland; I, looking towards it from the road, stood on Baden territory; the river ran sparkling and foaming between.

I crossed, and found the place all alive in anticipation of a Kermess, or fair, that was to be held there the next day but one. The townsfolk were all out in the streets, or standing about their doors; and there were carpenters hard at work knocking up rows of wooden stands and stalls, the whole length of the principal thoroughfare. Shop-signs in open work of wrought iron hung over the doors. A runlet of sparkling water babbled down a stone channel in the middle

of the street. At almost every other house (to judge by the rows of tarnished watches hanging in the dingy parlour windows), there lived a watchmaker; and presently I came to a fountain, a regular Swiss fountain, spouting water from four ornamental pipes, and surmounted by the usual armed knight in old grey stone.

As I rambled on thus (looking for an inn, but seeing none), I suddenly found that I had reached the end of the street, and, with it, the limit of the town on this side. Before me rose a lofty, picturesque old gate-tower, with a tiled roof, and a little window over the archway, and there was a peep of green grass and golden sunshine beyond. The town walls (sixty or seventy feet in height, and curiously roofed, with a sort of projecting shed on the inner side) curved away to right and left, unchanged since the Middle Ages. A rude wain, laden with clover, and drawn by mild-eyed, cream-coloured oxen, stood close by in the shade.

I passed out through the gloom of the archway into the sunny space beyond. The moat outside the walls was bridged over and filled in—a green ravine of grasses and wild-flowers. A stork had built its nest on the roof of the gate-tower. The cicalas shrilled in the grass. The shadows lay sleeping under the trees, and a family of cocks and hens went plodding inquisitively to and fro among the cab-bages in the adjacent field. Just beyond the moat, with only this field between, stood a little solitary church—a church with a wooden porch, and a quaint, bright-red steeple, and a churchyard like a rose-garden, full of colour and perfume, and scattered over with iron crosses wreathed with immortelles.

The churchyard gate and the church door stood open. I went in. All was clean, and simple, and very poor. The walls were whitewashed; the floor was laid with red bricks; the roof raftered. A tiny confessional like a sentry-box stood in one corner; the font was covered with a lid like a wooden steeple; and over the altar, upon which stood a pair of battered brass candlesticks and two vases of artificial flowers, hung a caricature of the Holy Family, in oils.

All here was so cool, so quiet, that I sat down for a few moments and rested. Presently an old peasant woman trudged up the church path with a basket of vegetables on her head. Having set this down in the porch, she came in, knelt before the altar, said her simple prayers, and went her way.



Was it not time for me also to go my way? I looked at my watch. It was past four o'clock, and I had not yet found a lodging for the night.

I got up, somewhat unwillingly; but, attracted by a tablet near the altar, crossed over to look at it before leaving the church. It was a very small slab, and bore a very brief German inscription to this effect:

TO THE SACRED MEMORY

OF

THE REVEREND PÈRE CHESSEZ,

For twenty years the beloved Pastor of this Parish.

Died April 16th, 1825. Aged 44.

HE LIVED A SAINT; HE DIED A MARTYR.

I read it over twice, wondering idly what story was wrapped up in the concluding line. Then, prompted by a childish curiosity, I went up to examine the confessional.

It was, as I have said, about the size of a sentry-box, and was painted to imitate old dark oak. On the one side was a narrow door with a black handle, on the other a little opening like a ticket-taker's window, closed on the inside by a faded green curtain.

I know not what foolish fancy possessed me, but, almost without considering what I was doing, I turned the handle and opened the door. Opened it, peeped in, found the priest sitting in his place, started back as if I had been shot, and stammered an unintelligible apology.

"I—I beg a thousand pardons," I exclaimed. "I had no idea—seeing the church empty——"

He was sitting with averted face, and clasped hands lying idly in his lap—a tall, gaunt man, dressed in a black soutane. When I paused, and not till then, he slowly, very slowly, turned his head, and looked me in the face.

The light inside the confessional was so dim that I could not see his features very plainly. I only observed that his eyes were large, and bright, and wild-looking, like the eyes of some fierce animal, and that his face, with the reflection of the green curtain upon it, looked lividly pale.

For a moment we remained thus, gazing at each other, as if fascinated. Then, finding that he made no reply, but only stared at me with those strange eyes, I stepped hastily back, shut the door without another word, and hurried out of the church.

I was very much disturbed by this little incident, more disturbed, in truth, than seemed reasonable, for my nerves for the moment were quite shaken. Never, I told myself, never while I lived could I forget that fixed attitude and stony face, or the

glare of those terrible eyes. What was the man's history? Of what secret despair, of what life-long remorse, of what wild unsatisfied longings was he the victim? I felt I could not rest till I had learned something of his past life.

Full of these thoughts, I went on quickly into the town, half running across the field, and never looking back. Once past the gateway, and inside the walls, I breathed more freely. The wain was still standing in the shade, but the oxen were gone now, and two men were busy forking out the clover into a little yard close by. Having inquired of one of these regarding an inn, and being directed to the Krone, "over against the Frauenkirche," I made my way to the upper part of the town, and there, at one corner of a forlorn, weed-grown market-place, I found my hostelry.

The landlord, a sedate, bald man, in spectacles, who, as I presently discovered, was not only an inn-keeper, but a clock-maker, came out from an inner room to receive me. His wife, a plump, pleasant body, took my orders for dinner. His pretty daughter showed me to my room. It was a large, low, whitewashed room, with two lattice windows, overlooking the market-place, two little beds, covered with puffy red eiderdowns at the farther end, and an army of clocks and ornamental timepieces arranged along every shelf, table, and chest of drawers in the room. Being left here to my meditations, I sat down and counted these companions of my solitude.

Taking little and big together, Dutch clocks, cuckoo clocks, châlet clocks, skeleton clocks, and pendules in ormolu, bronze, marble, ebony, and alabaster cases, there were exactly thirty-two. Twenty-eight were going merrily. As no two among them were of the same opinion as regarded the time, and as several struck the quarters as well as the hours, the consequence was that one or other gave tongue about every five minutes. Now, for a light and nervous sleeper such as I was at that time, here was a lively prospect for the night!

Going down-stairs presently with the hope of getting my landlady to assign me a quieter room, I passed two eight-day clocks on the landing, and a third at the foot of the stairs. The public room was equally well stocked. It literally bristled with clocks, one of which played a spasmodic version of Gentle Zitella, with variations, every quarter of an hour. Here I found a little table prepared by the open window, and a dish of trout and a flask of country wine awaiting me. The pretty

daughter waited upon me. Her mother bustled to and fro with the dishes; and the landlord stood by, and beamed upon me through his spectacles.

"The trout were caught this morning, about two miles from here," he said, complacently.

"They are excellent," I replied, filling him out a glass of wine, and helping myself to another. "Your health, Herr Wirth."

"Thanks, mein Herr—yours."

Just at this moment two clocks struck at opposite ends of the room—one twelve and the other seven. I ventured to suggest that mine host was tolerably well reminded of the flight of time; whereupon he explained that his work lay chiefly in the repairing and regulating line, and that at that present moment he had no less than one hundred and eighteen clocks of various sorts and sizes on the premises.

"Perhaps the Herr Engländer is a light sleeper," said his quick-witted wife, detecting my dismay. "If so, we can get him a bedroom elsewhere. Not perhaps in the town, for I know no place where he would be as comfortable as with ourselves, but just outside the Friedrich's Thor, not five minutes' walk from our door."

I accepted the offer gratefully.

"So long," I said, "as I insure cleanliness and quiet, I do not care how homely my lodgings may be."

"Ah, you'll have both, mein Herr, if you go where my wife is thinking of," said the landlord. "It is at the house of our pastor—the Père Chessez."

"The Père Chessez!" I exclaimed. "What, the pastor of the little church out yonder?"

"The same, mein Herr."

"But—but surely the Père Chessez is dead! I saw a tablet to his memory in the chancel."

"Nay, that was our pastor's elder brother," replied the landlord, looking grave. "He has been gone these thirty years and more. His was a tragical ending."

But I was thinking too much of the younger brother just then to feel any curiosity about the elder; and I told myself that I would put up with the companionship of any number of clocks, rather than sleep under the same roof with that terrible face and those unearthly eyes.

"I saw your pastor just now in the church," I said, with apparent indifference. "He is a singular-looking man."

"He is too good for this world," said the landlady.

"He is a saint upon earth!" added the pretty Fräulein.

"He is one of the best of men," said, more soberly, the husband and father. "I only wish he was less of a saint. He fasts, and prays, and works beyond his strength. A little more beef and a little less devotion would be all the better for him."

"I should like to hear something more about the life of so good a man," said I, having by this time come to the end of my simple dinner. "Come, Herr Wirth, let us have a bottle of your best, and then sit down and tell me your pastor's history!"

The landlord sent his daughter for a bottle of the "green seal," and, taking a chair, said:

"Ach Himmel! mein Herr, there is no history to tell. The good father has lived here all his life. He is one of us. His father, Johann Chessez, was a native of Rheinfelden, and kept this very inn. He was a wealthy farmer, and vine-grower as well. He had only those two sons—Nicholas, who took to the church, and became pastor of Feldkirche; and this one, Matthias, who was intended to inherit the business; but who also entered religion after the death of his elder brother, and is now pastor of the same parish."

"But why did he 'enter religion'?" I asked. "Was he in any way to blame for the accident (if it was an accident) that caused the death of his elder brother?"

"Ah, Heavens! no!" exclaimed the landlady, leaning on the back of her husband's chair. "It was the shock—the shock that told so terribly upon his poor nerves! He was but a lad at that time, and as sensitive as a girl—but the Herr Engländer does not know the story. Go on, my husband."

So the landlord, after a sip of the "green seal," continued:

"At the time my wife alludes to, mein Herr, Johann Chessez was still living. Nicholas, the elder son, was in holy orders and established in the parish of Feldkirche, outside the walls; and Matthias, the younger, was a lad of about fourteen years old, and lived with his father. He was an amiable, good boy—pious and thoughtful—fonder of his books than of the business. The neighbour-folk used to say even then that Matthias was cut out for a priest, like his elder brother. As for Nicholas, he was neither more nor less than a saint. Well, mein Herr, at this time there lived on the other side of Rheinfelden, about a mile beyond the Basel Thor, a farmer named Caspar Rufenacht and his

wife Margaret. Now Caspar Rufenacht was a jealous, quarrelsome fellow; and the Frau Margaret was pretty; and he led her a devil of a life. It was said that he used to beat her when he had been drinking, and that sometimes, when he went to fair or market, he would lock her up for the whole day in a room at the top of the house. Well, this poor, ill-used Frau Margaret——"

"Tut, tut, my man," interrupted the landlady. "The Frau Margaret was a light one!"

"Peace, wife! Shall we speak hard words of the dead? The Frau Margaret was young, and pretty, and a flirt; and she had a bad husband who left her too much alone."

The landlady pursed up her lips, and shook her head, as the best of women will do when the character of another woman is under discussion. The innkeeper went on.

"Well, mein Herr, to cut a long story short, after having been jealous first of one and then of another, Caspar Rufenacht became furious about a certain German, a Badener, named Schmidt, living on the opposite bank of the Rhine. I remember the man quite well, a handsome, merry fellow, and no saint; just the sort to make mischief between man and wife. Well, Caspar Rufenacht swore a great oath that, cost what it might, he would come at the truth about his wife and Schmidt; so he laid all manner of plots to surprise them—waylaid the Frau Margaret in her walks, followed her at a distance when she went to church, came home at unexpected hours, and played the spy as if he had been brought up to the trade. But his spying was all in vain. Either the Frau Margaret was too clever for him, or there was really nothing to discover, but still he was not satisfied. So he cast about for some way to attain his end, and, by the help of the Evil One, he found it."

Here the innkeeper's wife and daughter, who had doubtless heard the story a hundred times over, drew near and listened breathlessly.

"What, think you," continued the landlord, "does this black-souled Caspar do? Does he punish the poor woman within an inch of her life, till she confesses? No. Does he charge Schmidt with having tempted her from her duty, and fight it out with him like a man? No. What else then? I will tell you. He waits till the vigil of St. Margaret—her saint's day—when he knows the poor sinful soul is going to confession; and he marches straight to the house

of the Père Chessez—the very house where our own Père Chessez is now living—and he finds the good priest at his devotions in his little study, and he says to him: 'Father Chessez, my wife is coming to the church this afternoon to make her confession to you.' 'She is,' replies the priest. 'I want you to tell me all she tells you,' says Caspar; 'and I will wait here till you come back from the church, that I may hear it. Will you do so?' 'Certainly not,' replies the Père Chessez; 'you must surely know, Caspar, that we priests are forbidden to reveal the secrets of the confessional.' 'That is nothing to me,' says Caspar, with an oath. 'I am resolved to know whether my wife is guilty or innocent; and know it I will, by fair means or foul.' 'You shall never know it from me, Caspar,' says the Père Chessez, very quietly. 'Then, by Heavens!' says Caspar, 'I'll learn it for myself.' And with that he pulls out a heavy horse-pistol from his pocket, and with the butt-end of it deals the Père Chessez a tremendous blow upon the head, and then another, and another, till the poor young man lay senseless at his feet. Then Caspar, thinking he had quite killed him, dressed himself in the priest's own soutane and hat, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and stealing round the back way into the church, shut himself up in the confessional."

"Then the priest died!" I exclaimed, remembering the epitaph upon the tablet.

"Ay, mein Herr—the Père Chessez died; but not before he had told the story of his assassination, and identified his murderer."

"And Caspar Rufenacht, I hope, was hanged?"

"Wait a bit, mein Herr, we have not come to that yet. We left Caspar in the confessional, waiting for his wife."

"And she came?"

"Yes, poor soul! she came."

"And made her confession?"

"And made her confession, mein Herr."

"What did she confess?"

The innkeeper shook his head.

"That no one ever knew, save the good God and her murderer."

"Her murderer!" I exclaimed.

"Ay, just that. Whatever it was that she confessed, she paid for it with her life. He heard her out, at all events, without discovering himself, and let her go home believing that she had received absolution for her sins. Those who met her that afternoon said she seemed unusually bright and happy. As she passed through the

town, she went into a shop in the Mon-  
garten Strasse and bought some ribbons.  
About half an hour later, my own father  
met her outside the Basel Thor, walking  
briskly homewards. He was the last who  
saw her alive. That evening (it was in  
October, and the days were short), some  
travellers coming that way into the town  
heard shrill cries, as of a woman scream-  
ing, in the direction of Caspar's farm. But  
the night was very dark, and the house lay  
back a little way from the road; so they  
told themselves it was only some drunken  
peasant quarrelling with his wife, and  
passed on. Next morning Caspar Rufenacht  
came to Rheinfelden, walked very quietly  
into the Polizei, and gave himself up to  
justice. 'I have killed my wife,' said he.  
'I have killed the Père Chessez. And I  
have committed sacrilege.' And so, indeed,  
it was. As for the Frau Margaret, they  
found her body in an upper chamber, well-  
nigh hacked to pieces, and the hatchet with  
which the murder was committed lying  
beside her on the floor. He had pursued  
her, apparently, from room to room; for  
there were pools of blood and handfuls of  
long light hair, and marks of bloody hands  
along the walls, all the way from the  
kitchen to the spot where she lay dead."

"And so he was hanged?" said I, com-  
ing back to my original question.

"Yes, yes," replied the innkeeper and  
his womankind in chorus. "He was  
hanged, of course he was hanged."

"And it was the shock of this double  
tragedy that drove the younger Chessez  
into the church?"

"Just so, mein Herr."

"Well, he carries it in his face. He  
looks like a most unhappy man."

"Nay, he is not that, mein Herr!" ex-  
claimed the landlady. "He is melancholy,  
but not unhappy."

"Well, then, austere."

"Nor is he austere, except towards him-  
self."

"True, wife," said the innkeeper; "but,  
as I said, he carries that sort of thing too  
far. You understand, mein Herr," he  
added, touching his forehead with his fore-  
finger, "the good pastor has let his mind  
dwell too much upon the past. He is  
nervous, too nervous, and too low."

I saw it all now. That terrible light in  
his eyes was the light of insanity. That  
stony look in his face was the fixed, hope-  
less melancholy of a mind diseased.

"Does he know that he is mad?" I  
asked, as the landlord rose to go. He  
shrugged his shoulders and looked doubtful.

"I have not said that the Père Chessez  
is mad, mein Herr," he replied. "He has  
strange fancies sometimes, and takes his  
fancies for facts, that is all. But I am  
quite sure that he does not believe himself  
to be less sane than his neighbours."

So the innkeeper left me, and I (my  
head full of the story I had just heard)  
put on my hat, went out into the market-  
place, asked my way to the Basel Thor,  
and set off to explore the scene of the Frau  
Margaret's murder.

I found it without difficulty—a long,  
low-fronted, beetle-browed farm-house,  
lying back a meadow's length from the  
road. There were children playing upon  
the threshold, a flock of turkeys gobbling  
about the barn-door, and a big dog sleeping  
outside his kennel close by. The chimneys,  
too, were smoking merrily. Seeing these  
signs of life and cheerfulness, I abandoned  
all idea of asking to go over the house.  
I felt that I had no right to carry my  
morbid curiosity into this peaceful home;  
so I turned away, and retraced my steps  
towards Rheinfelden.

It was not yet seven, and the sun had  
still an hour's course to run. I re-entered  
the town, strolled back through the street,  
and presently came again to the Friedrich's  
Thor and the path leading to the church.  
An irresistible impulse seemed to drag me  
back to the place. Shudderingly, and with  
a sort of dread that was half longing, I  
pushed open the churchyard gate and went  
in. The doors were closed; a goat was  
browsing among the graves; and the rush-  
ing of the Rhine, some three hundred yards  
away, was distinctly audible in the silence.  
I looked round for the priest's house—the  
scene of the first murder; but from this  
side, at all events, no house was visible.  
Going round, however, to the back of the  
church, I saw a gate, a box-bordered path,  
and, peeping through some trees, a chimney  
and the roof of a little brown-tiled house.

This, then, was the path along which  
Caspar Rufenacht, with the priest's blood  
upon his hands, and the priest's gown  
upon his shoulders, had taken his guilty  
way to the confessional! How quiet it  
all looked in the golden evening light!  
How like the church path of an English  
parsonage!

I wished I could have seen something  
more of the house than that bit of roof  
and that one chimney. There must, I told  
myself, be some other entrance—some way  
round by the road! Musing and lingering  
thus, I was startled by a quiet voice close  
against my shoulder, saying:



"A pleasant evening, mein Herr!"

I turned, and found the priest at my elbow. He had come noiselessly across the grass, and was standing between me and the sunset, like a shadow.

"I—I beg your pardon," I stammered, moving away from the gate. "I was looking——"

I stopped in some surprise, and indeed with some sense of relief; for it was not the same priest that I had seen in the morning. No two, indeed, could well be more unlike; for this man was small, white-haired, gentle-looking, with a soft, sad smile inexpressibly sweet and winning.

"You were looking at my arbutus?" he said.

I had scarcely observed the arbutus till now, but I bowed and said something to the effect that it was an unusually fine tree.

"Yes," he replied; "but I have a rhododendron round at the front that is still finer. Will you come in and see it?"

I said I should be pleased to do so; he led the way, and I followed.

"I hope you like this part of our Rhine-country?" he said, as we took the path through the shrubbery.

"I like it so well," I replied, "that if I were to live anywhere on the banks of the Rhine, I should certainly choose some spot on the Upper Rhine between Schaffhausen and Basle."

"And you would be right," he said. "Nowhere is the river so beautiful. Nearer the glaciers it is milky and turbid—beyond Basle it soon becomes muddy. Here we have it blue as the sky—sparkling as champagne. Here is my rhododendron. It stands twelve feet high, and measures as many in diameter. I had more than two hundred blooms upon it last spring."

When I had duly admired this giant shrub, he took me to a little arbour on a bit of steep green bank overlooking the river, where he invited me to sit down and rest. From hence I could see the porch and part of the front of his little house; but it was all so closely planted round with trees and shrubs, that no clear view of it seemed obtainable in any direction. Here we sat for some time chatting about the weather, the approaching vintage, and so forth, and watching the sunset. Then I rose to take my leave.

"I heard of you this evening at the Krone, mein Herr," he said. "You were out, or I should have called upon you. I am glad that chance has made us acquainted. Do you remain over to-morrow?"

"No; I must go on to-morrow to Basle,"

I answered. And then, hesitating a little, I added: "You heard of me, also, I fear, in the church."

"In the church?" he repeated.

"Seeing the door open, I went in—from curiosity—as a traveller; just to look round for a moment, and rest."

"Naturally."

"I—I had no idea, however, that I was not alone there. I would not for the world have intruded——"

"I do not understand," he said, seeing me hesitate. "The church stands open all day long. It is free to every one."

"Ah! I see he has not told you!"

The priest smiled, but looked puzzled.

"He? Whom do you mean?"

"The other priest, mon père—your colleague. I regret to have broken in upon his meditations; but I had been so long in the church, and it was all so still and quiet, that it never occurred to me that there might be some one in the confessional."

The priest looked at me in a strange, startled way.

"In the confessional!" he repeated, with a catching of his breath. "You saw some one—in the confessional?"

"I am ashamed to say that, having thoughtlessly opened the door——"

"You saw—what did you see?"

"A priest, mon père."

"A priest! Can you describe him? Should you know him again? Was he pale, and tall, and gaunt, with long black hair?"

"The same, undoubtedly."

"And his eyes—did you observe anything particular about his eyes?"

"Yes, they were large, wild-looking, dark eyes, with a look in them—a look I cannot describe."

"A look of terror!" cried the pastor, now greatly agitated. "A look of terror—of remorse—of despair!"

"Yes, it was a look that might mean all that," I replied, my astonishment increasing at every word. "You seem troubled. Who is he?"

But instead of answering my question, the pastor took off his hat, looked up with a radiant, awe-struck face, and said:

"All-merciful God, I thank Thee! I thank Thee that I am not mad, and that Thou hast sent this stranger to be my assurance and my comfort!"

Having said these words, he bowed his head, and his lips moved in silent prayer. When he looked up again, his eyes were full of tears.

"My son," he said, laying his trembling hand upon my arm, "I owe you an expla-

nation; but I cannot give it to you now. It must wait till I can speak more calmly—till to-morrow, when I must see you again. It involves a terrible story—a story peculiarly painful to myself—enough now if I tell you that I have seen the Thing you describe—seen it many times; and yet, because it has been visible to my eyes alone, I have doubted the evidence of my senses. The good people here believe that much sorrow and meditation have touched my brain. I have half believed it myself till now. But you—you have proved to me that I am the victim of no illusion.”

“But, in Heaven’s name,” I exclaimed, “what do you suppose I saw in the confessional?”

“You saw the likeness of one who, guilty also of a double murder, committed the deadly sin of sacrilege in that very spot, more than thirty years ago,” replied the Père Chessez, solemnly.

“Caspar Rufenacht!”

“Ah! you have heard the story? Then I am spared the pain of telling it to you. That is well.”

I bent my head in silence, and we walked together without another word to the wicket, and thence round to the churchyard gate. It was now twilight, and the first stars were out.

“Good-night, my son,” said the pastor, giving me his hand. “Peace be with you.”

As he spoke the words, his grasp tightened—his eyes dilated—his whole countenance became rigid.

“Look!” he whispered. “Look where it goes!”

I followed the direction of his eyes, and there, with a freezing horror which I have no words to describe, I saw—distinctly saw through the deepening gloom—a tall, dark figure in a priest’s soutane and broad-brimmed hat, moving slowly across the path leading from the parsonage to the church. For a moment it seemed to pause—then passed on to the deeper shade, and disappeared.

“You saw it?” said the pastor.

“Yes—plainly.”

He drew a deep breath; crossed himself devoutly; and leaned upon the gate, as if exhausted.

“This is the third time I have seen it this year,” he said. “Again I thank God for the certainty that I see a visible thing, and that His great gift of reason is mine unimpaired. But I would that He were graciously pleased to release me from the sight—the horror of it is sometimes more than I know how to bear. Good-night.”

With this, he again touched my hand; so, seeing that he wished to be alone, I silently left him. At the Friedrich’s Thor I turned and looked back. He was still standing by the churchyard gate, just visible through the gloom of the fast deepening twilight.

I never saw the Père Chessez again. Save his own old servant, I was the last who spoke with him in this world. He died that night—died in his bed, where he was found next morning with his hands crossed upon his breast, and with a placid smile upon his lips, as if he had fallen asleep in the act of prayer.

As the news spread from house to house, the whole town rang with lamentations. The church-bells tolled; the carpenters left their work in the streets; the children, dismissed from school, went home weeping.

“’Twill be the saddest Kermess in Rheinfelden to-morrow, mien Herr!” said my good host of the Krone, as I shook hands with him at parting. “We have lost the best of pastors and of friends. He was a saint. If you had come but one day later, you would not have seen him!”

And with this he brushed his sleeve across his eyes, and turned away.

Every shutter was up, every blind down, every door closed, as I passed along the Friedrich’s Strasse about mid-day, on my way to Basle; and the few townsfolk I met looked grave and downcast. Then I crossed the bridge, and, having shown my passport to the German sentry on the Baden side, I took one long, last farewell look at the little walled town as it lay sleeping in the sunshine by the river—knowing that I should see it no more.

“THAT’S ‘one ghost,’ evidently,” said Arthur Stacey, referring to Cameron’s pencilled memorandum, “and I should say decidedly ‘inexplicable.’ Now for the next,” and he took up the underlying paper, which was labelled—

#### THE SIGNOR JOHN.

##### I.

It seems but this morning that I got up before the sun, in our little wooden house, to cook, bake, wash in the river, help to mow the grass, coax my father, serve my brother Niccolo, and be as happy as the grasshoppers that sing both night and day. We lived upon a very high Alp, and we were poor, though we did not suffer hard-

ship. In winter we had plenty of pine-logs to keep the fire alive, and at night we were very gay, singing songs, and playing the zither. In summer we breakfasted on the grass in the faint dawn, dined under the long roof at the sheltered side of the house, and supped by the starlight; after which I danced for my father, while Niccolo played the pipes. The chance passing of travellers was an excitement to us. A wood-carver from the Tyrol sprained his foot near our place, and taught Niccolo to carve whilst we nursed him. This was something to be grateful for, as travellers would buy the work, and besides, it gave our boy something to do. He was a cripple from his birth; one foot did not come to the ground somehow, and his back was a good deal bent. He had a little square face, with bright eyes, and brown hair, and was said to be quite a Swiss, as our mother had been. The first figure he carved was my patron saint, Christopher, wading through the torrent with the Child-God on his shoulders, and it was given me after he had bitten one of my fingers because I had stayed out alone in the moonlight, forgetting to fetch him. He never was so vexed, however, that I could not offer him comfort, asking him to plait my long hair, which came to my ankles. I would sit down on the ground with my back against his knees, when he would dress the hair beautifully. If I were restless he would hurt me, if I were patient he would kiss me; and if his work pleased him fully, he was blithe the rest of the day.

Once I went with my father to a feast at a lower village, the festa of St. Florian. This was the first occasion on which I wore my mother's costume. On the night before the feast I was holding out my foot to note how my shabby skirt had crept up my leg. My father came and measured me with his alpenstock. "You are now as tall as your mother," he said; "you may henceforth wear her clothes." He shed tears in the morning when he saw me in her dress, but was so well pleased afterwards, that I ran to the nearest tarn to see what I could be like. The tarn was nearly filled with rosy clouds, besides a gigantic pine-tree, which tapered up and broke them. I seized the sombre draperies of the pine-tree, and, gazing into the water, saw a maiden like the women whose fathers are wealthy vine-dressers. Her petticoat was of orange cloth, her long, narrow apron of a rich shade of blue, her black velvet bodice was laced with gold over white, and a deep red

sash was folded well about her waist. The only part of the picture that I knew was a pale dark countenance, with bright red lips, and the wide black eyes that seemed to take up half the face. I marked Niccolo's plaits and the silver arrows he had fastened in them, and the bunch of scarlet ash-berries which he had fixed behind my ear. I saw that this was myself, and ran merrily back to the chalet to hug my little Niccolo, and tell him not to pinch our neighbour Teresa, who was kindly coming to keep house for him whilst my father and I were away.

Placido with his mule came to meet us: a young man of the village who had sometimes business on our Alp. He brought us to see his house, in which he had just put pretty furniture, and asked us to praise the fresco of St. Florian upon the gable, which he had lately got retouched for the festa. He had also made a new staircase up to his balcony; and the people joked Placido, saying he meant to take a wife.

It was a very pleasant festa. People treated me as a woman, now that I was grown enough to wear my mother's clothes. I was often asked to dance, and listened to with attention when I sang and played the zither. The next day Placido brought us a long way upon our road towards home; we could not get him to leave us till the worst of the journey was past. Thanks to his stout mule, we got over all our difficulties, and were going along merrily, when we heard a voice above us shouting through the pines.

Right above our heads there was a desert of lonely crags, a wild and dreaded place, where death lies in wait for men. My father left me sitting upon a pine-stump, and went shouting up the crags, seeking the stranger who had called. He returned with him by-and-bye, and we hurried along on our journey, for though the air was flushed with colour, yet the darkness was close at hand. We hastened along in silence, dragging each other up steepes, and going hand in hand, step by step, slowly across narrow shifty places. The traveller had a fair foreign look, which is to us most perfect beauty. His locks shone in the twilight, after my father's dusky head had got lost in the gloom of the pines.

Arrived at our Alp at last, we found Teresa preparing supper, and Niccolo sitting in the doorway, piping shrilly up to the moon. The stranger gave me his hand up the last ascent, then raised it to his lips.

"My pretty little girl," he said, "you have certainly saved my life."

When Niccolo saw us coming he limped to meet us.

"Who is this that has come with you, Netta, who smiles and kisses your hand?"

"Hush! Niccolo; he is English, but he understands our talk."

The stranger threw down his hat and knapsack before our door. The firelight shone over the threshold, and our neighbour Teresa appeared carrying out the supper-table, which she placed upon the grass.

The next morning, when I wakened, I peeped down between the rafters of my bedroom in the loft, and saw the stranger talking to my father in the doorway.

I crept down the ladder, and found nobody in the place. Niccolo had lit the fire for me, and gone away to his work, and I heard my father's voice shouting in the distance. The signor was then gone. I heaved a sigh between regret and relief, and seized hold of a pitcher, and prepared to go to the tarn. I made a step across the threshold and started back; the signor was leaning smoking against our chalet.

I sprang back so quickly that I broke the pitcher, and had to press my hand on my eyes to keep the tears from falling.

"Child!" said the signor, smiling in at me, "why do you take such pains to hide your face? One does not see so pretty a thing every day."

"I am not pretty this morning," I said. "It was only my mother's clothes. And I was hiding my face in trouble because I have broken my jug."

"And you were going to fetch water?" he said, "and yonder pail is too heavy for you? And it was all owing to me that you broke the pitcher?"

He lifted the pail on his shoulders. "Come, let us fetch the water," he said; "I shall want you to show the way."

We fetched the water together, and the stranger taught me to call him the Signor John. He had an air grand and gentle, and a pleasant light in his eyes. He laughed gaily when amused, and that encouraged me. At breakfast we saw no Niccolo, and I invited the Signor John to look at his carvings: at St. Barbara with her tower, St. Dorothy and her roses, St. Vincent among his orphans, St. Elizabeth, whose royal mantle was filled with bread. Niccolo had carved them all, and they stood in a row in his workshop. They were far the finest things we had got in our chalet; yet when I brought the signor to look at them Niccolo shut the door in his face.

"Never mind!" said the Signor John,

"we can amuse ourselves; I wish to make a sketch of you if you don't object to sit."

"I ought to be at my work," I said; but ran to tell my father, who was chopping wood in the pine-brake.

"It is an honour not to be refused," he said. "You must ask the good Teresa to stay and prepare our dinner."

The signor spread out his pictures for me to see; saying he was an artist only by love, and not by profession. I thought that love must have the best of it, so beautiful was his work; much finer than Placido's fresco, which was considered something grand. There were pictures of lovely ladies who were of his own country; and their beauty seemed to laugh at me, and my heart began to sink.

"Signor," I said, almost tearfully, "shall I not return to the chalet, and put on my mother's clothes?"

"Your mother's clothes!" he cried, amazed.

"Those I had on yesterday. The colours are gay and bright. Else I shall make such an ugly picture—you will throw it away."

"You make far the prettiest picture I have ever seen," he said, "and I shall hang it up where I can look at it every day."

I blushed with surprised delight. "Thank you, Signor John," I muttered, and crossed my hands as he had arranged them, and gazed over into the pine-forest in a way which he had already approved.

The signor remained at our chalet for a whole week. Every morning we started on some new excursion; he and I together, for my father had not time to attend to him, and Niccolo could not walk.

One evening we were all at supper when Placido appeared with his mule coming up our Alp. My father welcomed him kindly, and bade him sit down and eat. He looked strangely at the Signor John, and then at me, but our new friend spoke to him pleasantly, and they were soon conversing together. Placido was a large man, with a calm face. He had dark thoughtful eyes, and brows well bent above them, and a heap of coal-black locks that left his temples broad and bare. He had a slow gentle smile, but was quick and firm in speech. "As steady as Placido Lorez," was a byword down in his village.

After supper was over Placido seized on the supper-table and carried it back to the chalet; I following on his steps with a dish and ewer. As I washed the platters and restored them to their shelves Placido put logs on the fire, and blew them into flames.



I finished my task and put off my apron, chattering gaily to him all the time. I could see his figure looming out against the firelight, and at the same time my father and the Signor John standing talking out in the moonlight.

Placido had given me very absent answers; but at last made a sudden move, and with two long strides stood right before me.

"Netta," he said, "I came to ask if you would marry me."

I was utterly amazed and a good deal frightened; he looked so very determined, as if I must come off that moment, whether I would or not. My knees knocked together, and I clung to the table.

"You don't really mean it, Placido; you cannot want a wife!"

"Not *any* wife," he said; "I only ask for you."

"Oh, Placido, don't!" I said.

"Look you, my little dearest one!" he urged, "you may think me a rough lover. But never was a wife more loved and prized than you will be, if you come to me!"

"Thank you, Placido," I said, "you mean to be very kind to me; but I do not think about marrying; and please be so very good as not to ask me again."

My father and the Signor John here put in their heads at the door.

"What is this that is going on?" said my father. "Netta! are you scolding our neighbour?"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Placido, "it is only that my suit displeases her. I asked her just now to marry me; and she does not wish to consent."

"What?" cried my father, turning to me. "You don't mean to say that you would refuse so kind an offer? Do not think about me, my daughter. I would rather see you provided for than keep you for my comfort."

"I do not like to marry," I said, weeping. "I do not love Placido, and it would be dreadful to have to marry him."

Placido's face flushed and then turned pale again. "I did not come here to make you weep," he said, sadly. "The pain of my disappointment is not worth one of your tears."

He turned to go away, but my father seized him by the arm. "Wait, my dear friend!" he said, "and do not be offended at a girl who is still a child."

Then turning to the signor, who had looked on gravely at this scene:

"Signor! come to my assistance," he cried. "Netta will heed your counsel."

The signor looked at me tenderly, with an uneasy look in his face.

"As you say, she is only a child," he said. "I beg you will give her a little longer time to play."

"So be it then," said my father.

I drew a long breath of relief, and looked gratefully at the friend who had saved me. Placido gazed from me to the signor, and from the signor back to me; then suddenly laid hold of his alpenstock and bade us a quick good-night.

After this we had some more pleasant days, till at last there arrived a sad one when the signor prepared to leave us. I felt an odd pain in my heart which I could not drive away. The night before his departure I was standing at the fire alone; the logs were almost burnt, and lay in a red heap on the hearth. The signor came and stood by me.

"Netta, when I am gone you must often think of me."

I strove with a sensation of choking.

"What! have you not a word for me?"

"I do not want to weep," I cried, and my tears came down in a storm.

"I will certainly come back next year," said the signor, "and then you will be a woman grown."

I wrung my hand away from him, and fled to my loft. The next morning at breakfast he scarcely looked at me. My father was going a journey with him, and they talked about the roads. Niccolo, who had now become merry, made faces behind the signor's back, while I stood miserably in the doorway, rubbing my chilly hands together. The travellers bade us good-bye, and Niccolo went off to his workshop; but I stood gazing drearily down the Alp.

The signor turned and came back to me.

"Buy yourself a ribbon, pretty one," he said, "when you go to the next festa."

In another moment he was gone, and I had a piece of gold in my hand. I uttered a moan of indignation, and went flying down the Alp. "Signor John! Signor John!" I cried, in a voice that must have been shrill enough to frighten the eagles.

I crushed the money into his hand, but it fell to the ground between us; and he hurried off, laughing, and looking over his shoulder. I dug the earth with my nails, and buried the gold where it lay; then fled away into the pine-brake, to weep long and fiercely. That evening Placido came back and repeated his question. I gave him a sullen "No;" and he went away more sadly than he had done before. And

then I began to get happy again, for Niccolo did not pinch me, and talked to me all about his carvings, just as before the signor came.

But my father came back from his journey with a troubled face.

"Placido has left his village," he said, "and gone to push his way in the world!"

## II.

THREE years passed, and I was a staid maiden, who did not care much for festas nor gay clothes. I was not of so merry a temper as I had promised to be, and people thought I was haughty, and some of the girls disliked me. This was partly owing to Niccolo, who would say, "You need not speak to Netta, she is grown so proud: she thinks herself quite a princess since the Englishman kissed her hand!" A little thing gets one a character when gossip are by to talk. Then I did not choose to marry, and that was the worst; for though suitors might not grieve like Placido Lorez, yet no one likes to be refused, and their friends resented my coldness. So I was a lonely kind of creature, and lived in my own way, clinging fast to my father, and only vexed when he would say, "When I am dead and gone, Netta, who will take care of you and our peevish Niccolo?"

So things went on till the avalanche came down upon us, killing my poor father, and burying him in the ruins of our house. The goats and kids were killed, and Niccolo was sorely hurt; and only I, as if by miracle, escaped.

We sat for many hours on the fallen rocks, till the people from the village reached us, when they brought us down to their houses, and treated us like their own. I tried to give little trouble, for I had nothing to give them in return; nothing at all had we saved but the clothes we wore; Niccolo's arm was hurt so that he could not carve, and a woman's work is not much when she has not got a home to work in. The housewives in the village had got daughters of their own, and nobody seemed in need of a girl to help them. The worst was that nobody would love Niccolo, for, besides being utterly helpless, the lad had a biting tongue.

Placido's aged mother came out to look at me; when she saw my saddened face the tears came down her cheek.

"My girl," she said, "I have hated you, for you sent my son away, but the Lord has sent you trouble, and I must forgive you."

She brought me into her house, and I

told her my bitter thoughts, and that I wanted to go down to the world where wages are given to labour.

"At Como," she said, "are the silk factories; and there is many a way of earning when one gets down to the level world. You used to play the zither, and sing a song."

"That is long ago," I said, "and the zither is buried with my father. I fear that all my music is buried with it."

"At your age the music is not hushed so quickly," she said, kindly, and pulled an old zither down from a shelf. "It used to be sweet enough," she added; "take it with my blessing. At least it may cheer your way if it puts no money in your purse. And the village shall see to your Niccolo: though it must be owned he is an imp."

So I resolved to go down to the level world, to work at the silks of Como, or at anything I could find to do. The zither was to go with me, and Niccolo was to stay at the village, till such time as I should have money to come back and fetch him.

I took my zither on my shoulder, and a wallet in my hand, and, committing myself to God, I set out on my lonely way. Niccolo limped along with me half a mile; and when we found he could go no further, we stopped on the lonely road for a last embrace. The poor lad had always loved me dearly, and his spirit was quite broken now, and he clung to me with cries. It was a moment of the cruellest anguish when I had to push him at last away from me, and to hurry away. I heard his sobs behind me for a long way as I went, and later fancied I could hear them still, in the rush of the falling river, and the faint wail of the pines.

I had passed two pretty villages along my way, and the sun had already set when I reached the third. There was a glare behind the mountains, and a warm golden haze floated in the vale. The houses came down a hill and the streets were flights of steps. Far above the roofs, and out of the chestnut-trees, rose the burning brazen cap of the campanile, and the bell was sounding lazily, as if ringing itself to sleep. The pines I had left behind me, in fringe of olive and purple, on the dusky heights: and here there were only the heavily-laden fruit-trees, chestnuts drooping over my shoulder, cherries dropping into my mouth, walnuts lining the roadside, and fig-bushes thrust in my path. Vines ran over the walls and upon the crimsoned roofs, and clusters of ripened grapes hung in at the

doors and windows. A cloud of silvery smoke had blent with the haze of the sunset, and there was a smell as of burning logs and fragrant food.

The next day I passed through still more villages, and got down to the flush and bloom of the Lombard plains. The mountains here became walls of a gigantic garden, vines wrapped their terraces, and melons ripened in the meadows in the midst of the corn. Plums were as lumps of gold, and the peaches glowed in the fruit-gatherer's basket, while nectarines and apricots added perfume to the coloured air. Great rows of mulberry-trees reminded me now of the silk works, and the grasshoppers sang so loud that I took them for birds.

I got on board a small sailing vessel that plied upon the lake, earning my fare by a little music, and went singing down to Como, weary, travel-soiled, and with blisters on my feet. I fell asleep in the middle of my songs, and was gently shaken awake again by the captain's merry wife. She wore a white-and-scarlet head-dress, and a large cross of gold, and crushed grapes out of a basket into her baby's laughing mouth. The gaiety here on the lake was a thing to make one stare: boats with scarlet cushions, ladies in lace mantillas, boatmen with dazzling shirts and brilliant sashes. The lake glowed with the most exquisite bluish green, and out of it rose the palaces, with terraces climbing the heights. We passed towns like straggling castles, whose streets were ladders of stone creeping up from the water; and all these wonderful novelties were to me a fantastic dream.

Giulia, the captain's wife, found me a lodging in the town of Como, a closet under a chimney, beside the room where she and her husband had their home. In order to reach this nest, I had to climb a hundred steps, which wound in and out of the houses up to the roofs. Noises roused me by three o'clock in the morning, wheels rolling, voices shouting, tambourines ringing, besides the sound of many novel kinds of music. I brushed up my dusty clothes, and went out to look at the town. The people were holding their market in the piazza of the Duomo, and tables were there set out, with provisions piled on them lavishly. The shops under the loggie were already all alive, and deep amber curtains fluttered gaily out of the arches. Flowers teemed from the dark and crooked balconies overhead, which hung like crazy cages from the upper windows. Colours were flashing everywhere; from brilliant oleander blossoms hanging like living flames in the air;

from the gay dresses of the people, the piles of monster melons, the red marbles of the Broletto, and the Duomo's deeper hues.

I lifted the heavy curtain, and went into the Duomo; the mass was over, and most of the people were gone; but others kept pouring in, and the place was full. Somebody touched me on the shoulder, and I looked up with a start. Here was Placido, in the dress of a boatman!

"Netta!" he whispered, excitedly. His face was flushed, and there were tears in his eyes.

"Oh, Placido Lorez!" I cried, and gave him both my hands.

We sat on a bench and whispered in a shady corner of the church. Each had a story to tell, and each had a ready listener.

"My father is dead, Placido," I said, "and Niccolo is hurt in the Alps. I have come down here to Como to try and earn money at the silk. That is my whole story: so life is sad enough."

"I guessed it was so," said Placido. "I knew how it must be with you when I saw you crying at the mass. As for me, I have travelled far. I have stored crops and driven oxen, and helped with the vines in the south. For some months I have been a boatman here on the lake; and yesterday I had it in mind to return to the Alps. But now I believe I'll wait a bit. There's never good in haste."

"There is a captain's wife who is good to me," I said, it being now my turn again; "and she says I shall earn money by singing, for the people here in the plains are as fond of music as ourselves. I sing better than I used to do, and your mother has given me her zither."

"Little Netta!" he said, "I have made a good bit of money, and I don't like to think that you must work. I can't forget the day when you declared you could not love me, but maybe if you were to try you might change your mind. It's not that I am much to care for, but the love in my heart is strong. Who knows but that, after all, I could make you happy!"

"Placido," I said, "you are a kind man, but as I refused to marry you before when I had got a home, so I will not accept you now, because I am in need of one."

"I would not bribe you with anything but just my love," he answered, mournfully. "So if it cannot be, it can't, and I will not vex you. You must at least let me be your friend, however."

"My best friend," I said; and after that we walked hand in hand about the church, Placido showing me the pictures, and ex-

plaining what they meant, and telling me the touching stories that are painted in the jewelled windows.

The captain's wife befriended me, and people liked my music, and I could earn more money with my zither than in the factories. The people would gather round me, asking each for his favourite song, and my story got whispered among them, and they were kinder than I could tell. "She sings for a helpless brother," they said, and fees were therefore doubled as they dropped in my lap. Great people also would send for me now from their villas; and I began to save a little money.

I had to sing one evening at a palace on the lake, and it was dark when I took my seat in the verandah. The lake glittered with moonlight, and all along the terraces hung dimly-coloured lamps. A crowd of gay figures had gathered on the marble steps that led into the water. When I sang every one listened; when I ceased, I was forgotten; save that somebody went to a table and fetched me wine.

I looked up to thank this somebody, and saw the Signor John.

"Little Netta!" he exclaimed, amazed. "Can it be possible that this is you?"

"Yes, signor," I said.

"Tell me how it has happened," he asked. "What can have fetched you down out of the snows to Como?"

"My father is killed by the avalanche," I said, "and I am earning money for Niccolo, who is hurt in the Alps. It is now time for me to go, signor; good-bye!"

"Stay, I am going with you!" he said, and followed me out on the hill, carrying my zither.

"Sit down here and rest," he said, when we had gone a little way.

"But I have still to get to Como," I said, "and I want to rest in my bed."

"That is true," said the signor, smiling. "Let us then take a boat at once!"

I looked up the water, and assured myself that Placido was nowhere waiting for me. I stepped into the signor's boat, and went floating with him down the moonlit lake.

"How beautiful you have grown, Netta!" said the signor as we went. "Did I not tell you that you would be a woman when we should meet again?"

I gravely shook my head. I remembered that he had not come back, even to see if I were alive.

"You have also grown prim and cold," he added presently. "Indeed, you are so changed that I wonder how I knew you."

"It is only that one cannot always be a child," I said, sadly; and he lifted me out of the boat, and brought me to the foot of the staircase which led up to my nest in the roof. When I peered down from the top I saw him still looking up. I looked then into the glass at the face which the Signor John had called so beautiful.

"Placido never told me that I was beautiful," I reflected.

### III.

AFTER that I saw the signor every day. I had long walks on the hills with him, and many a pleasant hour on the moonlit lake. He used to meet me at the Duomo, so that I could not think of my prayers; and Giulia began to tease me, calling me a noble English dame.

"You'll not forget me and baby," she said. "You'll send us a present from England;" and I had already considered in secret about what I should send her.

I thought I should be extremely happy were it not for Placido Lorez: but his face was always before me, and his eyes had got grave and sad. His sadness troubled me so much that I tried to keep out of his way, and he soon saw that I avoided him, and was careful not to annoy me. Once when I went out on the lake with the Signor John, it happened that Placido's boat was the boat he hired. Not till I was fairly seated did I see the boatman.

Placido picked up his oars, and took his seat so that he could not see me; and never spoke a word nor moved his head. His oars dipped in the lake and scattered the shining water to right and left; but except for this sign of life he might have been taken for a man of stone. He did not even glance at me as I passed him out of the boat, but his downcast face haunted me all that night.

The next day I was tripping along by the boats on the verge of the lake; my zither perched on my shoulder, and flowers blooming in my breast; rare bright flowers, sent me that morning by the Signor John. It was far in the afternoon, when there is a glitter about the place, such a burning of colour and flashing of water, such a glow and dazzle overhead and underfoot, that sometimes one can hardly see one's way. The boats look all the same, with their crimson cushions, and with the dash, as of ink, in the water, under the side that is against the sun. The boatmen's white shirts make them also one like another, though none were so tall as Placido, nor so quiet, nor yet so strong. This time I did



not see him, however, till he put himself right in my way.

"Netta! I want to speak to you."

"Make haste then!" I said, gaily.

Placido took my hand and made me sit on the side of his boat. Before this I had rather believed in his strength than known it.

He looked at me, straight in the face, with a long wistful gaze. "You are going to meet the signor?" he said.

"Yes."

"Netta, has he asked you to be his wife?"

I said, "Not yet, Placido;" and I began to get angry.

"Netta, do you think you love him?"

I hung my head and blushed, which might mean anything.

"Dear!" he said, "you need not be angry, but you must listen to me. Gentlemen seldom marry peasant girls, though it may charm them to walk and sail with one like you. And you have yourself to look to. Don't think me selfish, for I have no wish on earth, if it be not to see you happy. If I could have made you happy, I would have done it; but as that is not to be—by Heaven I'll see that no one shall make you wretched!"

"I am not so easily made wretched," I said, haughtily.

Placido looked at me tenderly for a moment, and then turned away his face.

"Wicked tongues can break the purest heart," he said, softly.

I looked at him in great amazement, and then I blushed: my face blushed, and my ears, my throat, and my naked arms: and then the blood seemed to freeze within me, and my pulses got cold and still. I did not speak for a minute, but gazed on the ground and thought.

"Placido, you may look at me now," I said, presently, "for I am only going to thank you."

Then I turned and left him, and went my way. I did not flaunt so gaily, nor trip so lightly as usual. The pain in Placido's face had given me a shock.

The signor was already waiting for me up in the hills; it being now a matter of course that I should meet him there in the evenings, when we would watch the sun set redly behind the vineyards; while he talked to me all about England, and of his home where my pretty portrait now hung on the wall. I had believed that he always thought of me as future mistress of this honoured home: never thinking at all of the gulf between us. Now I sat by him silently looking down on the shining lake.

"Netta," he said, "what ails you?"

"I have been thinking of how I can tell you that I must not come here again," I said.

"Must not come here again!" he echoed. "Who has the right to prevent you?"

"Only my own will," I answered.

"Then that must bend to mine," he said, smiling, "for I cannot live without you."

A lump rose up in my throat, but I choked it down.

"Signor," I said, sadly, "I am an ignorant girl from the mountains, while you—you know the world. You might have been kinder."

He glanced quickly at my face; his brow suddenly reddened, and he turned his head away from me. So had Placido looked when he feared to pain me; only Placido had nothing to blush for: the blush had been left for me.

"There is no need to be vexed," I said, "and I did not mean to hurt you. I am going back to the town now. I shall always be proud of your friendship, Signor John."

I waited a minute patiently, but he did not move his head. I did not see any reason why I should wait or speak to him again, so I turned away, and began walking towards the town.

I heard his steps coming behind me.

"Netta!" he called.

"Well?" I said.

"Netta, will you be my wife?"

I felt a great shock of triumph. He had really said the words, and I could tell Placido; and yet somehow all the gladness had gone out of my heart. In an hour my life was changed; yet I did not know it.

I said "Yes," slowly, for I thought I loved him, and I remembered that he was a noble signor, and that in this he was very good. Placido had said truly that lords do not marry peasants; and the signor had made a sacrifice in order to win my hand. I knew that I ought to be proud of it, and yet somehow I felt ashamed. I could not forget his face when he had turned it away from me, nor the struggle which I had then witnessed, nor the wound that had been given to my pride. Surely I might be content, I thought, yet I wept that whole night through; I thought I had been a great deal happier when alone on the Alpine paths.

The signor brought me gifts; a chain for my neck, and trinkets for my ears, and a ring for my fingers, as pledge of troth. Never was a more generous lover than the Signor John. The evening after I

received them I decked myself in the jewels, and ran out into the twilight to bring my news to Placido. This friend had been away at Colico since early dawn, and I watched for his coming back from my little window up in the roof. His boat pulled into the harbour just after sunset.

"Oh, Netta! is it you?" he cried, and sprang eagerly to the beach.

I shook my head at him laughingly, and the dying flare of the sun blazed on my jewels.

"Placido, I have come to tell you about it: I am to be married this day week!"

Placido bent his head: "I thank God for your welfare," he said.

I bit my lips cruelly, and the tears sprang to my eyes. I had thought that he might have been just a little grieved.

"It is wonderful," I said, "how friends can be glad to lose one."

Placido looked at me in wonder. His face was deadly pale, and he appeared to be very tired, or to have lately suffered. Somehow I could not be satisfied, though I had come out here to triumph over him. He had thought I could be treated lightly, and I had shown him his fears were vain. He had thanked God for my happiness; and that was all.

He began now to speak cheerfully, seeing that clouds had gathered on my face.

"So you are going to be a noble lady!" he said, "in some splendid place beyond seas. Maybe in the course of years you will come back to Como."

I did not believe a word of it; it seemed all a lying tale. It was like the stories told out of the curling smoke when the logs are burning in the Alps. I stood upon a heap of sails, with my foot on the edge of the boat, my jewels flashing as the boat swayed, and my eyes on the west where the light was fading. Yes, yes, I was to be a noble lady, and to live in a foreign country with the Signor John, and there would be a very vast difference, in the days that were still to come, between me up in my high place and Placido plying his boat on the lake.

The light faded away, and the water lapped darkly at the side of the boat. My jewels ceased to flash, and there was a long, long silence, which Placido broke.

"And Niccolo?" he asked, abruptly, as if following out some train of thought.

I gave a sudden violent start, and stared at him blankly. In the midst of my excitement I had forgotten Niccolo. In arranging for my own welfare I had let my poor helpless brother slip out of my thoughts.

"The signor will take care of him," I muttered; "I will take him with me to England."

"Your signor is a generous man," returned Placido; and then I bade him good-night, and went up to my nest to think.

I sat on my bed in the dark, tossing my twinkling jewels about in my lap. The signor had gone to a ball at one of the palaces on the lake; he was dancing even at this moment with the ladies who were quite his equals, yet whom he had not found so lovable as simple me. Ah, for the sake of my love, would he be good to Niccolo? It seemed to me, as I sat there in the depths of my sore remorse, that there was no one half so dear to me as that lone, helpless creature whom people disliked and called the imp: I had promised to come back for my brother, and I vowed I would keep my word.

Next day I was earlier than I need have been at the familiar seat on the hill.

"Signor," I said, as soon as he was seated beside me.

"You must not call me 'signor,' Netta."

"Ah, I always forget. You remember my brother Niccolo?"

The signor's face clouded. "I do remember him well," he said.

"He is waiting till I return for him, up in the Alps."

"He must wait a long time, then, Netta, if you are coming with me."

"Signor!" I said, "can we not bring Niccolo with us?"

He laughed a low laugh. He did not mean to be unkind, I think; it was only that he felt amused.

"No, Netta; indeed we could not take him."

"He has no one at all but me," I said, speaking low, holding my breath.

"He must learn to do without you, then. Once for all, my pretty one, you must leave your friends behind you; though you can still provide for your brother—getting some one to take good care of him up in the mountains."

"No one loves Niccolo," I muttered, reflectively.

"Therefore you need not think me cruel," said the signor.

"Therefore I cannot leave him," I whispered.

The signor began to look angry.

"Netta!" he said, "you talk like a spoiled child. You must try to forget Italy, and that is the plain truth. It will be quite hard enough upon me——" Here he stopped.

"Yes?" I said, looking at him. "Tell me what will be hard."

"Nothing," he said, smiling again; "nothing that will not be set right when you have been a year in England."

"And have quite forgotten Italy?"

"And have almost forgotten Italy. And now, since that is settled, my Netta, tell me what you will have for a wedding gift?"

"Signor," I said, "you have already given me too much. You have, indeed, been very good to me—that I cannot forget."

"Tush, Netta! what is the matter with you?" he said. "I will give you anything you like."

I sat silent again, looking out over the water. In the distance some elegant ladies were embarking from their marble staircase. Away at the bottom of the lake towered the azure walls of the Alps, and away, further still, folded up somewhere in their royal purple, sat my sad crippled brother, my poor peevish lad, whom nobody, save myself, would ever love. Yonder, with the dainty ladies, was the place for the Signor John; mine was in the Alps, with Niccolo.

"Signor," I said at last, "I am an ignorant girl, but I have been lately thinking more than you would believe. I acknowledge that it was generous of you to ask me to be your wife, and that my love would not be worth to you all the trouble it must cost. Like should mate with like, and you and I are unlike; yet I should hardly have dared to speak had it not been for Niccolo."

The signor looked at me in amazement.

"You mean that you want to be free again, Netta."

"Yes," I said, "if you please."

"You mean to give up everything for Niccolo!"

"To-morrow I shall be on the Alps, going back for him," I said.

"Netta, you shall not jilt me!"

"No, Signor John, that would, indeed, be too saucy. You shall jilt me, if you like it better."

"This is very fine," he said, "but I shall alter your way of thinking!"

"In the mean time say good-bye, signor, for I shall not see you to-morrow."

"Good-bye, Netta, for the present."

"Good-bye, Signor John, and may God be with you!"

He had caught both my hands, as if he would not let me go; but I twisted them from him suddenly, and went running down the hill and out of his sight.

I packed up my jewels, and sent them back to their owner, who had been generous enough to give them, as though I had been fit to be his wife. My good Giulia carried them, after mourning over them for an hour, and early on the following day I went out to look for Placido.

"I've come to say good-bye, Placido. I'm off now to the Alps."

"The Alps!" cried Placido, wonderingly.

"For Niccolo," I said, brightly. "We are not going to England though. The signor is going alone."

Placido sprang from his boat with a radiant face.

"Ah, Netta! is it truth? But you shall not travel alone."

"Of course I shall travel alone. I did it before with a sadder heart."

"I am going to see my mother," said Placido. "I hope you will not object."

"Why should I object?" I said. "Your mother will be glad to see you."

"As glad as your Niccolo to see you."

"I'll take care to tell her you are coming," I said.

"You think, then, that you are likely to out-walk me?"

"What! do you mean to say that you are coming with me now?"

"I mean to be your fellow-traveller," he said, "unless you tell me truly that you would rather be alone."

I could not say that I would rather go alone, so we made our journey together back to the Alps. As we went along Placido told me much of his former journeys, and what grief he had suffered, and what dreary things he had said to himself; and I knew well that his misery had been because I could not love him. As for me, I confessed my carelessness with regard to Niccolo, and my feelings towards the English signor, which had been all made up of pride; and Placido tried to excuse me a little, and promised not to think ill of me. It was much happier travelling with him than wandering quite alone, and by the time we got near his village I was grieved that the journey was past.

We sat upon two large pine-stumps then, and looked at each other gravely. Another wind of the road would bring us within sight of friends. I had felt a strange joy in being alone in the world with Placido, and I knew by Placido's face that he liked taking care of me.

"Netta," said Placido, simply, "will you be my wife at last?"

"I wonder you ask me again," I said;

"but it would cost me far too dear to refuse you now."

So it happened that we were married in his village church, with his mother and my Niccolo, besides many friends, around us. And now we are again at Como; Niccolo, who has got stronger, is carving figures under our trees, while grandmother teaches our child to touch the zither. And Placido is not a boatman now; we live in our own vineyard, where the Signor John has been to see us, bringing his charming English bride.

As Arthur Stacey read these last words, he laid down the manuscript and looked around him. The candles were beginning to flicker in their sockets, and the end of the room was already in darkness. The wind was blowing pretty stiffly outside, and the roar of the Atlantic was more distinct than he had heard it since his arrival at Valentia. Nevertheless, Arthur thought that a turn in the fresh air would do him good; so, donning his thick coat, and ordering fresh candles to be lit ready for his return, he sallied forth and faced the storm.

Naturally enough, as it seemed to him, he turned his steps toward the office, with the intention of availing himself of the permission which had been accorded him of seeing the Slaves at work. Mr. Gay was in his room as Arthur entered the hall, and the door being open, he looked up, and, pushing aside the papers over which he had been poring, accompanied the visitor into the temple of the Lamp.

There it was, ever burning brightly, and ever assiduously watched. They stood behind, the Slave sitting, as usual, with his eyes intent on the paper screen, but the spot of light remained steady and motionless. Scarcely, however, had they turned aside to chat at the fireplace when their attention was attracted by the movement of the light, now to the left, now to the right of the centre line, and by the Slave's saying:

"New York tells Heart's Content that an Englishman named Cameron, who says he is a friend of Mr. Gay's, is in their office, talking to the superintendent. Heart's Content thinks Mr. Gay might like to know this, so sends it on."

"Cameron is probably there about your business, Mr. Stacey," said Mr. Gay, in a low tone. "If you wait here a few minutes I have no doubt we shall have further information."

So Arthur Stacey waited and waited,

but the Lamp revealed nothing that had the smallest interest for him. Incessantly went on the work of the two Slaves, the one reading, the other recording messages of every conceivable kind; messages in French, and German, and English, messages in cipher, messages in brokers' language, to the outer world as unintelligible as cipher, domestic messages, diplomatic messages, and messages of life and death; but to Arthur Stacey the Lamp spoke no more. Tired of waiting for further news from Cameron, after a short time Arthur Stacey bade Mr. Gay good-night, taking with him the superintendent's promise that any message in which he was interested should be at once conveyed to him.

He had intended to go to bed on his return, but the thought that there might be news from Stewart Cameron had put all such ideas to flight. He must be up to hear it when it came, and he must divert his mind until it did come; so he mixed himself a smoking tumbler of whisky-punch, pulled the fresh-lighted candles towards him, and commenced the perusal of the next manuscript, which bore the strange title of—

#### THE LAST TENANTS OF HANG-MAN'S HOUSE.

THEY came no one knew whence, and they lived no one knew how; for though she was evidently a lady born and bred, and more delicate than most, yet they had no servant but Molly Hartland, the shock-headed "maid" of old Jem living in the mud cottage under the cliff; and she went only by chance times, and not for long together; she never stayed a night in the house, nor saw more of it than the kitchen where she did her "chores" in her rough way, and then left. They had come quite suddenly one wild October night, and had taken possession of Hangman's House—a dilapidated old place, which had got its name from one of its former possessors, who, suspected of treachery by his comrades, had been hunted like a rat and caught in the loft, and his body left hanging on an improvised gallows out of the window. Since then it had earned but evil repute, now for smugglers, now for spectres; with darker tales still of belated travellers or shipwrecked men who had been seen to go in, but never to come out; for all those terrible half-mythic crimes which are sure to centre in a long disused house standing desolate on a wild coast. And there these latest tenants had lived ever since their arrival, a year or so ago now, buying nothing but



such food as was absolutely necessary; and sometimes having Molly to do such work as the lady was physically incapable of doing. They had no visitors; they never received a letter; they called themselves Capstone, and were man and wife, though they looked more like father and daughter. For he was a good twenty years older than she, and she seemed to have more fear of him than goes with wifely love of the right sort.

He was a tall, lean man, with sloping shoulders, a hatchet face, sucked-in leathery cheeks, and a large hooked nose like the beak of a bird of prey; his eyes were small and of a fiery red, sunk deep beneath heavy brows, the coarse light hairs of which fell over them like the thatch of a pent-house; his thin lips were set into a perpetual smile, more subtle than the most open sneer; his straw-coloured hair hung evenly all round from the centre of his head; and his long and bony hands had curved fingers and pointed nails, which, to carry the resemblance still further, were also like the talons of a bird of prey. His manner, when by chance he spoke to any one—and always to his wife—was of exquisite politeness; but Lilian had learned to dread his politeness more than his wrath. Indeed it was his wrath; for the more anger he felt the more suavely he showed, and the more cruelty he practised.

For the wife herself, poor Lilian, she was just such a one as is doomed by nature to be a victim. With very little judgment, and of varying mood, being sometimes timid to abjectness, and at others bold to rashness, never seeing when to yield or when to oppose, and her opposition always ending in tears and obedience, she was all that such a man as her husband could desire in his creature. And as all he needed was a creature, not a companion, he was well enough suited, with one whom he might use as he would without any fear of enduring resistance. Without any fear either of untoward protection; for Lilian was an orphan, and her only brother had gone away to sea many years ago now, and had never since been heard of. So, if not dead, he was as good as dead; and as, for sufficient reasons, Mr. Capstone had covered up all traces of his removal to Cornwall, there was not much chance, if ever Fred should turn up again, of his finding his sister under another name and in such a place as Hangman's House, out by Michael's Run. Wherefore, the lean man with the hooked nose and the curved fingers wrought his will, unchecked by the fear of God or the law of man.

Mr. Capstone had been about a year at Hangman's House, and the rough October weather had come round again, when a cry went up that a ship, caught between the two headlands, was drifting into the bay. The tide was running high, and a strong west wind was blowing straight in shore; black and Titanic rose the sharp and broken line of cliffs; long reefs, sunken, treacherous, ran far into the sea; while here and there huge rocks reared themselves out from the foam, like savage sentinels, barring all ingress into a bay as threatening, fierce, and deadly as themselves. It was a coast where was no mercy for any wandering boat, no way of escape for any drowning man; it was the cruellest bit of coast in all that cruel line, and it had cost more lives than any other spot; it was the terror of every seaman who had to pass that way, and the current set so strong in shore that ships steered far out to sea, and a sail was scarcely ever seen on the horizon. When one did appear it was mostly for doom.

On came the ship, blown right out of her course, her helm useless, her smaller spars gone, caught by the wind and the tide, and driven madly in shore. Already she had lost some of her men, washed overboard; but some were still left, whom the watchers on the cliffs could see, lashed to the rigging. The whole district had collected on the cliffs. The two coast-guards nearest at hand, and the men who, but for them, would have been wreckers of the old stamp, women and children, all were there; some to save and some to spoil; and among them was the lean, lank figure of the tenant of Hangman's House, with his pale wife on his arm.

The ship came drifting on, plunging into the waves and rising out again with a shudder like some creature in agony, flung from reef to reef as the waves lifted her and the wind carried her onward; till at last she came grinding on to the Lion Rock in the middle of the bay. There was no life-boat belonging to Michael's Run, and even if there had been one, she could not have lived in such a sea; but the coast-guards fired a couple of rockets, one of which fell short, and the other struck true. A tall man, who had been holding on gallantly, took the cord. He pushed aside a comrade who seemed to dispute it, and the weaker fell into the sea, while the stronger lashed the cord round him, and gave the signal to pull in shore.

"Good," said Mr. Capstone, applaudingly; "that fellow understands business." He had no sooner cleared the deck than

the mainmast fell, and in less than two minutes after, the ship fell to pieces like a toy puzzle, and only a mass of broken fire-wood showed where she had been. Not a man on board was saved except the one who had seized the rope and lashed it round him; and he was hauled in, senseless now, close to where the Capstones stood. He was a swarthy man, in the prime of life; that was all Lilian saw: when her husband, touching him lightly with his foot, turned to Molly Hartland and said, "Here, Molly, the sea has brought you a lover. Take him to my house, you fellows; I'll have him."

"Be advised, sir," put in Molly's father, old Jem, "there's no good in taking a man into your house as is washed up from the sea.

Save a stranger from the sea,  
And he'll turn your enemy.

That's what we say hereaway, sir, and there's the story of Cruel Coppinger to bear us out."

But Mr. Capstone only laughed till his red eyes were nearly lost behind the straw-coloured thatch above them, as he answered, turning his back on Jem, "I'll dare the saying, my man. Here, fellows! haul him along to Hangman's House; we'll soon bring him to his senses again; and I'll give you a sovereign to drink his health and hurt your own."

The shipwrecked man was a magnificent fellow to look at, tall, dark, and powerfully built, with a face absolutely faultless for manly beauty, and yet a face at which women would involuntarily shudder, and which no man would like to trust; a face which, speechless and lifeless as the man was, marked a nature at once desperate and resolute, bold, lawless, and determined. He was not the kind of man of whom a creature could be made, thought Lilian; what then did her husband want with him? She, who knew the guilty secret of their lives, knew also the necessity of keeping prying eyes out of it. What could they do with a man like this castaway admitted among the crimes that had to be hidden? Or was the guilt to be passed on to another? at once shared and multiplied?

Reckless of the consequences so sure to follow on her opposition, Lilian turned to her husband with a shuddering appeal.

"Do not take this man into the house!" she said, earnestly. "Hear me for once—do not."

"What, my love, after all my lessons?" said Mr. Capstone, with a smile, taking her arm with a caressing gesture.

The pale fair woman shrunk away,

blenched, and put up her left hand to wipe away the drops that started on her upper lip; but she said no more; and they both turned away from the crowd, none of whom saw the blood that trickled down her arm. At night, when she took off her gown, there were four sharp cuts where her husband had clasped her arm so affectionately, and dug his talons into her flesh.

For such a turbulent-looking man, it was wonderful how easily this castaway slipped into his place in the dull life at Hangman's House. No one could have been more tractable, or apparently more contented; and Mr. Capstone daily congratulated himself on the good luck which had cast his guest up in Mr. Hael's Run. He was no common sailor with hard and horny hands; he was a Spanish artist, a man accustomed to engrave on metal, and he had some knowledge of chemicals and casting. And as Mr. Capstone could speak Spanish, and Lilian could not, and as Manuel, as he called himself, could not speak English, he was no restraint on any one. The two men talked as they pleased without betraying to the woman what they wished to keep secret; and Mr. Capstone said what he would to Lilian, and threatened her with his polite air and affectionate smile, without the fact of Manuel's sitting there at the bench, engraving, being any check on him.

From the first Manuel superseded Lilian in the work she had been accustomed to do for her husband. He knew what he was about; better even than Mr. Capstone himself; and so was of more use than the nervous, uncertain, hysterical little wife; and one day, when he had specially pleased his employer, Mr. Capstone turned round to Lilian sitting idly crouched over the fire, saying, with a smile:

"My love, I begin to find you insupportable. My ruffian here can do all that you did, and ten times more; and it irritates me to see your pale sickly face, and those idle hands doing nothing. I must find employment for my own, my dear, if yours are so useless; and—get rid of you altogether."

And when he said this, he bent his face to hers, as if to kiss her, with an expression in his eyes that froze her very blood.

He was standing with his back to Manuel, and Lilian had turned her face towards him. Suddenly she saw the Spaniard's eyes fixed on her. As a rule he never looked at her; seemed to be hardly aware of her existence; save with

the most curt formality of politeness took no notice of her; but now, when she caught his black eyes fixed upon her, she saw before her the chance of another peril, almost worse than those already surrounding her. She would have rather read the deadliest hatred in those flaming eyes than what she did read. And so audaciously expressed, too! It was almost as if he had known what Mr. Capstone had said, and had invited her to take refuge in his love against the persecution of her husband.

Frightened Lilian, making some kind of muttered excuse, rose and left the room; running down-stairs into the kitchen, which until then had been her own poor sanctuary. She was standing there by the fireplace, all trembling, when the door quietly opened and Manuel stole in with a noiseless step. It was rare that Mr. Capstone left him a moment alone. Under one pretext or another he kept him always by his side.

Lilian's heart stood still for terror when she saw who it was that thus stole into her darkness. He came up to her, swift, stealthy, noiseless as a panther, his eyes flaming, his bronzed face instinct with passion; and when he was near her he caught her in his arms like a wild beast springing on its prey. Her fair hair broke loose and fell in long, soft waves over her face and breast; he kissed her hair, and he kissed the pale face greedily, roughly, harshly.

"I love you," he said in perfectly good English; "I will protect you, for I will kill him, and then you shall be mine."

"Good Heavens!" cried Lilian, shrinking from him; but he held her tight. "You are an Englishman!"

"I am nothing but the man who loves you," said Manuel, kissing her again; she would rather he had stabbed her.

"He must know!" she cried.

"If you betray me I will kill both him and you," said Manuel, coolly. "Don't be a fool, pretty Lilian; you are one, but I love you nevertheless. I have given you my secret; I know you can keep secrets; but, by all the saints in heaven, if you betray me, you shall repent it! I love you, my pale Lily, but I am not so mad as to put my life in peril for you. If one of us has to go, it shall be you; but it shall be neither. Another kiss. Peste! You refuse? Then I will take it. Adios, little girl. You are mine remember, and I will kill him for you; but, silence! else——!" And, with a peculiar gesture, Manuel dropped her into a chair, and glided from the kitchen as noiselessly as he had entered it.

So now Lilian had a secret to keep from her husband, as she had had his to keep from others through all those painful years.

The work went on, and went on well.

"That fool of a Spaniard is putting his neck into a fine noose," said Mr. Capstone to his wife, smiling across to Manuel as he took up his last plate, and examined it microscopically; Manuel taking no heed of his words, but quietly resting his head on his hand, while he looked at his employer patiently.

Still smiling, and in the same voice, Mr. Capstone continued in Spanish:

"My good Manuel, you are invaluable. You shall share like my brother; you are my more than brother—friend!"

On which Manuel smiled too, sedately, and replied that if his preserver and benefactor was pleased, all was well.

"When I have got what I want from him," said Mr. Capstone in English, with the most affectionate look and accent towards the Spaniard, "I shall give him up to the police, or get rid of him in some other way. He must be a fool to think I would trust him! I was saying, my friend," he went on, in Spanish this time, "that you have been a very treasure to me, and that I can never be too grateful for the work you have done. Courage! a few days more, and it will be completed!"

"Good!" said Manuel, quietly.

Lilian stood quivering in every limb. True, she loved neither of these men, but she feared for fear's sake, if not for love's. And then she herself was so desperately involved on all sides; but worst of all by her knowledge of Manuel's secret, and his cognisance of how much her husband was betraying him. What a nest of crime it all was! There was not one wholesome part in it.

After repeated trials, at last a perfect plate was produced. The imitation was not to be detected by the keenest expert living: for had not the clever thief and forger got some of the Bank paper? and was he not, therefore, master of the situation? His false gold, too, was to the hair's-breadth of balance. To be sure he could not counterfeit the ring; but, save the ring, all was right: and with the paper he could make play securely.

"And now," said Mr. Capstone, expanding his narrow chest, as the three were assembled round the fire on the evening of the day of success: "to leave this old rat's castle and enjoy life afresh!"

"Afresh!" said Lilian, with a weak kind of scorn.

"Would you think it afresh if I were to efface myself, and give you up to this black-headed ruffian?" asked Mr. Capstone, smiling, and putting his head on one side amiably.

"Hush! For God's sake do not say such things!" cried Lilian, turning paler than usual. Then she flushed to the very roots of her hair, and her husband looked at her curiously.

"He is a good-looking ruffian enough," he said, blandly. "Shall I make you over to him?"

"I will leave the room if you talk so," said Lilian, angrily; and she rose from her chair. But he laid his curved fingers on her arm.

"You will do nothing of the kind, my lady," he said. "You will wait for as long as I choose, and you shall hear what I choose. I begin to suspect you. Aha! Have you been looking over the fence, my lady?—making eyes, hey? thinking of handsome ruffians o' nights? This must be seen to. You and he together. By the Lord, but you'll smart for it! The score is running, upon my soul it is. No matter. I can pay it."

Lilian saw the Spaniard's face.

"Let me go," she said, faintly. "Oh God! let me go."

"My love, you are inconvenient," said her husband, pushing her down in her chair, while he played with her long hair. "Sit where you are, and be good company. It is an auspicious time; let us celebrate it."

The black December night was sharp and keen. The moon had not yet risen, and the sky was overcast with heavy clouds. Not a star shone above, not a light twinkled below; the whole land and sea, and heaven together, gave not the faintest sign of life; only a cruel wind, whistling through the crannies, and blustering round the house, fierce as on the day when Manuel was cast up from the sea.

"A glass of wine, for the good result of the day," then said Mr. Capstone, with sudden vivacity, rising, and taking glasses and a bottle from a locked cupboard in the room.

During all their late talk Manuel had been sitting in a lounging, careless manner, his legs stretched out, his hands folded in each other, his chin on his breast, apparently half asleep. The firelight flickered on his face, and Lilian saw just one narrow glittering line beneath his eyelids, which showed that he was awake, and watching. Mr. Capstone was, for him, somewhat slow

and clumsy at that cupboard. He drew the cork of the bottle, and they heard him drink and smack his lips.

"The primest port that was ever grown," he said, enthusiastically. "Here, Manuel, rouse up, my friend, and drink to our joint fortune! There are but two glasses left."

"I won't drink to-night," said Manuel, sleepily. "I am feverish."

"Tut, tut! such wine as this will drive both care and fever away," urged Mr. Capstone. "No fear of that," he added in English.

"I tell you no," said the Spaniard, doggedly. "You English can pour molten lead down your throats. But your vile stuff that you pay your guineas for is hateful to us who know what true wine is. Drink yourself, and let me be."

"As you wish, my friend; I would not press you against your will," said Mr. Capstone, amiably. "That cursed dog, he shall repent this," he said to Lilian, looking kindly at Manuel, as if he were telling her what they had been saying together.

But Manuel took no notice. He still sat stretched out before the fire, looking three parts asleep, and wholly indifferent.

Suddenly he roused himself.

"Let me drink," he said, holding out his hand.

Mr. Capstone gave him the wine with alacrity.

Manuel put it to his lips.

"Pah!" he said, disdainfully. "You call this wine? It is only fit for hogs." And he emptied it into the fireplace.

"Now," he said, "you will let me sleep."

"Ill-mannered hound," said Mr. Capstone, "your tether is nearly out. Here, you pale wretch, drink this," to Lilian, with a smile. "It is too good to waste on such as you, but I am in a jolly good humour to-night, and I will indulge you. That fool there has done the trick, so I don't mind throwing away a glass of wine on you. Here! drink it, I say; and see if you cannot look less like a ghost than you do."

Was Manuel dreaming? As Lilian raised the glass to her lips, he started up, shouting something in Spanish, and flung out his arms, striking the glass, which fell in fragments at his feet.

"Thousand pardons to the señora," he said, rubbing his eyes. "By the saints I was dreaming, and a pretty dream they sent me!"

"Don't mention it," said Mr. Capstone quite amiably. "An accident: who can prevent that?" Then turning to his wife, "Well, my love, you have lost your wine;



your lover's doing, not mine, remember. Never mind, you will sleep soundly enough without it. And now to bed, and—don't wake."

Lilian rose without remonstrance.

"Kiss me," said Mr. Capstone. "Kiss me, Lily," very tenderly.

"No," said Lilian, abruptly, "I will not."

The Spaniard was standing before the fire now, and she saw his hand move into his bosom and clutch at something.

"I wish I had never seen you in my life!" burst out Lilian. "I wish I had died before I had married you."

"Gently, gently, my love, you forget the consequences," said her husband, in a soothing voice. "Don't be so impatient, dear. The ruffian's turn will come perhaps."

Manuel, standing before the fire in a brown study, smiled and nodded to himself, soliloquising. "Yes," he said to himself aloud. "By the saints! yes."

Lilian fled, while Mr. Capstone laughed; but as she turned she met the Spaniard's eyes: just one glance; but that one glance was enough, both for him and for her.

"Pretty little playful kid!" said Mr. Capstone in Spanish, kissing his hand to her as she disappeared; but Manuel did not take up the ball. He only smiled in a quiet kind of amiable approval.

After she had gone the two men fell a-thinking. They were both silent, looking into the fire; both thinking the same thing, and meditating on the best way. At last Mr. Capstone, giving himself a shake as a dog might, reared up his lank lean figure, and looked about him.

"How strange it is," he said, musingly, "the regret one feels when one has come to the last of a thing. Here is the last of this old rat's castle where I have enjoyed such a quiet time of love and happiness with my Lilian—the last night—it oppresses me. I have keen perceptions of beauty, and I have enjoyed the beauty here."

"Where?" asked Manuel, simply.

"On the cliffs. I have a mind to see the old place once more. What say you, my friend?"

"It's a wild night," said the Spaniard, reluctantly. "Dark, is it not?"

"No, the moon is up now. The sea will look grand. Come."

"I don't see the delight," said Manuel, still reluctant.

Mr. Capstone laughed. "Afraid?" he said.

"Afraid, no! But you English are for

weather as for wine; nothing is too strong for you. However, I'll come," and he buttoned up his jacket, but left the middle buttons open, where he could thrust in his hand.

"Thanks—a minute," said Mr. Capstone, as he left the room.

As he left Manuel drew out a dagger and tried its point. "It will settle his business, I think," he muttered, grimly. But he kept a watchful eye on the door while he opened, with a false key, the desk where Mr. Capstone kept that roll of bank paper and the fine steel engraved plates.

Meanwhile the master, in his private room, looked at the chambers of his revolver.

"If necessary, sufficient," was his comment. Then he went up to Lilian's garret door, which he locked, and put the key in his pocket, saying to himself: "The fool! I wished to spare her, and she spoils my plan. What a curse it is that people will not do as they ought!" All of which he half said, half thought, as he was arranging a lighted candle in a staircase cupboard filled with tarred rope, shavings, and the like. Then he went down-stairs, humming an opera tune gaily.

"For our last walk!" he said, airily.

"Yes, for our last," repeated Manuel, quietly.

They took the way of the cliffs right over the Gauger's Path, where once, it was said, Coppinger had got an over-brave and zealous gauger in his boat, had laid his head on the gunwale, and had deliberately chopped it off with a hatchet. It was a wild place, where the cliffs had split asunder, leaving a chasm as clean, and black, and smooth as if it had been scooped out by a knife. By this time the wind had fallen, and the moon had come out, so that the chasm yawning at their feet was distinctly visible. The two men walked in an even line together, each careful not to give the other half a foot's pace in advance. Manuel was to the right, and had taken Mr. Capstone's arm, thus leaving his own right arm free, the hand thrust into his breast. But then he had only a dagger, and the other might use a revolver with his left hand to advantage.

"Peste!" cried Mr. Capstone, stopping suddenly on the very edge of the chasm, and hastily withdrawing his arm.

In an instant Manuel had swung him a few steps backwards, and in doing so faced him, and faced Hangman's House. Flames were creeping out of the windows, and the smoke was rising in dense clouds.

"Wretch!" he cried in English, "you have set fire to the house, and left her to be burnt alive!"

"What! a traitor!" exclaimed Mr. Capstone, reeling back, and raising his hand.

The moonlight shone on the barrel of a pistol; there was a click, a flash, a report, and the ball had grazed the Spaniard's cheek; but before the man could fire a second time Manuel had leaped upon him, borne him to the earth, and buried his knife to the hilt in his side.

"And you thought you were deceiving me?" he hissed, as he knelt on the dying man. "You thought you were making a tool of me? getting my neck in a noose, ha! while your own was to go free? Miserable dog! it is I—the black-haired ruffian, who used you; I who have been master throughout, who will have your wife, and your money, and who, up to this last moment, when you thought to throw me down that pit where I will throw you, have played with you, and foiled you!"

"Mercy, mercy!" sobbed the dying man. "My good Manuel, mercy, dear friend—pity!"

"The same mercy that you have had on her!" said the Spaniard, between his teeth.

He raised himself from the bleeding body, met the glassy eyes as they were fixed on him with the yearning look of death and despair; then, laughing harshly, he kicked him over where he lay, and flung him with his foot down the chasm. He heard the heavy fall of the body as it struck against the smooth sides; then a splash in the sea; and all was still.

Swift as an Indian he ran back to the house, just as Lilian appeared at the loft window in her white gown, her fair hair streaming over her shoulders; looking, in the moonlight, more like an angel than a woman. The sight of her burnt the Spaniard's heart, and convulsed it with pain. What if he could not save her! He must save her; he would; he had vowed that she should be his, and he would keep his vow though the very elements opposed! He rushed into the house, and through the stifling smoke; braving the sly creeping tongues of flame that were licking up the wall. He came to her door, which the fire had not yet touched. Before she had time to realise that it was he whom she had seen crossing the grass in the moonlight, her garret door was flung open, and Manuel, blackened with smoke and crimsoned with blood, had her in his arms.

"Now you are mine!" he said, "I have killed him."

"Heaven protect me!" cried Lilian, covering her eyes with her hands.

"I am better than Heaven," said Manuel, "and I will protect you." He kissed her passionately. "Lilian! Lilian! say that you love me!" he cried. "By the saints, if you do not, I will fling you into the flames and let you perish!"

He lifted her up in his arms, and hers fell round his neck as her hair fell over his face.

"Yes, I love you," she said, and fainted.

Manuel could never tell how he got out of the burning house, with that lifeless woman in his arms. It seemed to him as if nothing could have hurt him; and so, through smoke and fire, he bore the pale fair woman he loved, and laid her on the grass in the quiet moonlight. But when he flung himself down by her, and took her head on his knee, and called to her to look up and thank him by her love for her life, it was more the howl of a wild beast than the cry of a man which burst from his lips. She was dead.

When the neighbourhood was roused, as at last it was, by the news that Hangman's House was all ablaze, they came upon a strange sight. On the grass, some little distance from the house, her long rich silky hair spread smoothly out, her hands laid tenderly across her breast, and a pale December rose placed within them, lay poor Lilian, where the flames could not touch her, nor the falling rafters strike her. Not a trace of the master nor of the stranger was to be found; but some days after there was washed up by the tide the lank lean figure of the man they had known as Mr. Capstone, of Hangman's House, with a gaping knife wound in his side.

Not long after this there flashed into London society a stranger, rich, handsome, reckless, who seemed to have come from the clouds; a stranger whom mothers courted for their daughters, and to whom fathers and brothers gave their honest hands; a stranger who could speak many languages, and who was an accomplished artist, and who had travelled to all parts of the world. But who, when any one by chance spoke of Cornwall, and asked him if he knew that coast, used to aver with some warmth that he did not, and had no wish to know it.

And again, not long ago, a man who might have been that stranger's twin brother, was to be seen at Toulon, wearing

the bullet and the chain, under sentence of hard labour for twenty years, for homicide, where he had not been to blame. But in his indictment of crimes committed on French soil, no mention was made of the body which was washed ashore near Michael's Run in Cornwall, with a knife wound in its side; of the fair-haired woman laid on the grass near the burning ruins of Hangman's House; nor of the forged bank-notes by which that brief and brilliant season of London splendour and Parisian gaiety was maintained. And the man, being a philosopher in his way, used to smile to himself as he pondered on the difference there is between the things which are known and punished in the life of a man, and the things which are concealed and bear no harvest of shame; and how the latter are so frequently the worst of all!

"THAT'S a 'horror,' " said Arthur, as he finished the story, "probably by Grimmer, if he writes up to his name."

The next manuscript, docketed "Something light," was called—

#### THE HEAVENLY TWINS.

OLD Mr. Blissett's official career was carried on in the City; he was the tenant of chambers in Laurence Pountney-lane. His private life was passed in a comfortable house situate on the eastern side of Tavistock-square. He was by profession a solicitor, and enjoyed an excellent practice. He was reported to be worth a good deal of money. I was one of his articled clerks.

He was a pleasant-looking, clear-complexioned, blue-eyed old gentleman, with a pink bald head, and very white whiskers. He was fond of wearing stiff check cravats and capacious buff waistcoats. A heavy gold-rimmed eye-glass was wont to be suspended round his neck by a ribbon so broad, that it looked almost like a decoration or badge of some rare order of knighthood. His figure inclined to that redundancy of portliness which is yet not accounted uncomely in a man advanced in years. He carried his corpulence, for so it must in truth be described, with ease and dignity, almost with grace.

As a solicitor he prospered, of course, by the litigation of others, but he was himself a man of peaceful nature and friendly disposition. Even to the prejudice of his own interests as a professional man he was given to advising conciliatory measures to his clients. He would constantly intervene in disputed cases to recommend a compromise,

or, as he preferred to phrase it, "an amicable adjustment," involving, naturally, payment of costs. He was altogether a comfortable man to have to deal with, and he had obtained great popularity from a considerable public. He was respected on all hands. The Lord Chancellor returned his bow with peculiar cordiality. With certain of the puisne judges Mr. Blissett was almost on nodding terms. The bar shook hands with him heartily.

That Mr. Blissett was deeply learned in the law, I do not believe. He had entered the profession at a time when it did not stoop to test the acquirements of its members by such inquisitorial processes as "exams" at the Law Institution. He conducted his business on very simple principles. He invariably took counsel's opinion on every case submitted to him. His chambers were provided with a handsome library of law books bound in the regulation sheepskin turned up with crimson; but I never knew him consult one of those portentous volumes, or read anything, indeed, save only his letters and the newspaper. His articled clerks, I can confidently assert, he made no pretence at instructing. I, George Stack, was, as I have said, one of those legal subalterns, or solicitors in embryo. The other was James Sparrow, a young gentleman from the West of England. Mr. Blissett had duly accepted the liberal premiums stated, in our respective articles of clerkship, to be the consideration for his educating us in the mysteries of his profession. But it had seemed to him that he fulfilled his covenants in that respect when he turned us loose in his office, like lambs in a meadow, with liberty to browse as best we might. We were much as the other clerks, except that they were paid for their services, while we paid for the privilege of serving. We were made generally useful and performed multifarious duties. We did much copying, posted letters, carried blue-bags full of papers hither and thither, ran errands, and occasionally served writs. Certainly our official performances were not of a distinguished kind, while the science of our calling was quite a sealed book to us. If we were found, moved by ambitious impulses, snatching a scrap of learning from the pages of Stephen's Blackstone, let us say, Mr. Blissett immediately judged that we were wasting time, and lacked occupation. Forthwith he would hand us an affidavit in Chancery, or some such refreshing document, with instructions to copy it as neatly as might be, in fair engrossing hand, by a given

time. Some degree of legal practice we might by chance acquire in Mr. Blissett's office, but the spirit, philosophy, and history of our profession were things withheld from us as idle, needless, vain, if not, indeed, absolutely deleterious subjects of study.

Once a month, however, Mr. Blissett so far recognised his sense of the value of our premiums, if not of our services, and testified the respect he entertained, if not for us, then for our parents, as to invite us to dinner in Tavistock-square. And very good dinners, I am bound to say, he gave us. He was an admirable host, and he entertained us capitally. True, the happiness we enjoyed was not unleavened by headaches; but we—Jim Sparrow and I—were at a period of life when the penalties incurred by excess of pleasure, or the indiscreet pursuit of enjoyment, are lightly borne. And then if headaches came of the Tavistock-square banquets, there resulted also heartaches—and, upon the principle of homeopathy or of counter-irritation, there seemed good prospect that these two maladies would eventually subdue each other, and leave us, the patients, in tolerably sound condition again.

Our headaches I have sufficiently accounted for. Our heartaches arose thus. Mr. Blissett had two daughters; so of course Sparrow and I fell desperately in love with them. I say "of course," not simply because time out of mind it has been the bounden duty of all apprentices to fall in love with their masters' daughters, but for the further reason, that it seemed to me quite impossible, once having seen the Miss Blissetts, to refrain from yielding to an enduring and all-absorbing passion for them. They were—I am still prepared to maintain—perfectly and bewitchingly lovely. They were twin sisters, and their father's only children. Their sponsors, at their baptism, had named them Eleanor and Elizabeth. These appellations affection had changed or condensed into Nelly and Elly respectively. Their mother was no more. Her place in Mr. Blissett's household was supplied by his sister, a spinster lady of mature years, Miss Columba Blissett. Of this lady it is by no means my desire to speak censoriously. She was, I am persuaded, thoroughly kind-hearted and well-intentioned, strong in her sense of the duty she owed to her nieces. She always held that she was as good as a mother to them. There it seemed to me she overstated her case. A mother is anxiously watchful over the interests and welfare of her young,

but is yet not unprepared to consider the time when they will no longer need her fostering care, but will take flight from the shelter of her wings, and establish independent nests of their own. She will eye their proposed mates judicially, but will not object to their pairing in due season. I have even heard of mothers who have schemed to expedite the marrying of their offspring. But Miss Columba had quite other views of maternal duties. She protected her charges something too much. She guarded them from evil and from good alike. She warded off lovers from them; she flung cold water, and plenty of it, upon the flames they kindled; she voted admiration folly; love-making preposterous. And thus hindering courtship, she went far to render matrimony impossible.

The love of Sparrow and myself for Elly and Nelly Blissett thus met with difficulties at the very outset. But this was only to be expected, and in the nature of things. Nor was it wholly disagreeable to us. It was as those bitter drinks which, not in themselves very palatable, yet stimulate appetite and give relish to an entertainment.

Our opportunities of meeting the Miss Blissetts were not at first very frequent, being limited mainly to our monthly dinners in Tavistock-square. By-and-bye we ascertained the direction of the young ladies' walks, and notably on Sundays, with an absurd affectation of accident, we met them. They were invariably under the guardianship of Miss Columba; but it was part of our plan to occupy, by turns, the attention of the aunt, and by turns to enjoy the society of the nieces.

I have said that the Miss Blissetts were lovely. I need add little in the way of enhancing this description of them. Their forms were sylph-like; their movements most graceful. Their golden hair fell about them in clouds of spiral ringlets; their complexions were a dazzling combination of milk (country milk) and blush-roses; their eyes a turquoise blue; their lips a coral red; their noses—— But there is something odious about thus attempting to catalogue, with an auctioneer's accuracy, the infinite charms and graces of these divine young ladies. I forbear. I was not a man in possession. They were not taken in execution.

The twin sisters were wonderfully and fatally alike. There was really no saying, with any degree of confidence, which was Elly, which was Nelly, and, as though to defy distinction, they invariably dressed



alike; their favourite colour being a heavenly blue. How Sparrow and I first came to decide that *he* loved Nelly and that *I* loved Elly, why *I* did not rather love Nelly and *he* Elly, I have difficulty at this distance of time in stating. There was really no choice. Perhaps we left chance—the turn of a halfpenny—to decide for us.

"They really ought to be ear-marked," Sparrow would sometimes say, desperately. (He came from a sheep-breeding district.) But while admitting his own difficulties in the case, he was apt to be acrimonious in charging me with want of perception. He said that I had invaded his rights and transferred my affections from Elly to Nelly. I denied it. I avowed that I adored Elly, that I should never cease to adore her, that she was dearer to me than life itself, and much more to the same effect. "Then why squeeze Nelly's hand as you did last night?" he demanded. He had seen me do it, he added. I maintained that it was Elly's hand that I had squeezed. Sparrow made himself disagreeable. He snorted and tossed his head. We came near to quarrelling outright. He talked at me, involving me, as he was sometimes fond of doing, in a vague and general charge against "fellows." "If fellows ain't true to each other," he would say, "how can they expect other fellows to be true to them? But fellows are so selfish. I hate fellows who ain't open and above-board with me. I've known fellows have their heads punched for less." I asked him plainly if he was referring to me. He replied evasively, that fellows who found caps that fitted them had better wear them. I said that the cap did not fit me. So for a time the discussion closed. I did not want to quarrel with Sparrow. He was sometimes peevish and petulant, but on the whole he was a very good fellow. He was the confidant of my love, as I was of his. We were bound to each other by treaty and by self-interest. For if one failed, when his turn came for that duty, to engage the attention of Miss Columba, what chance had the other of approaching and laying siege to the twins?

I have suggested that our courtship had its difficulties. Miss Columba avoided, it was rare to find the sisters apart. They were as twin roses grafted on one stem. They were almost inseparable. They were never so happy as when permitted to appear twined together, their arms wreathed round each other's waists, and constituting a group that Sparrow and I found to be quite maddening in its exquisite grace and beauty.

And to make love to Nelly while Elly was so close at hand, or vice versâ, was certainly trying to the lover, taxed severely his powers of speech and strength of nerve. His passion-fraught words might move Nelly to tears; but what if they stirred Elly to laughter? Believe me, it's arduous work wooing twins. Happily they were parted at dinner-time, occupying seats on either hand of their father. And sometimes there were other guests who unconsciously aided us in sundering the sisters. We disliked these other guests as a rule, however—pronouncing them rivals.

How their relations managed I cannot say. I don't think they really knew the twins apart, but only pretended to do so. Old Mr. Blissett, I'm pretty sure, had but the vaguest notions as to which was Nelly, which Elly. But it didn't matter to him. He called them each "pet," and so surmounted all difficulty about their names. He kissed them both alike. They both kissed him. What more could he want?

Sparrow and I went on loving, and talking to each other of our loves. I confess I found him prosy and tiresome; he told the story of his affections at such undue length—went into so much needless detail—and I thought it really ungenerous of him to yawn when in my turn, but expressing myself far more happily, I set forth my passion and enumerated my emotions. Still we greatly enjoyed the situation altogether. There were times of depression, it is true, when the twins had seemed to look coldly on us, and we mingled our tears together and talked of ended dreams, blighted lives, and tombstones; but there were moments of exhilaration—Elly and Nelly had smiled upon us—when we rejoiced exceedingly, and pledged each other in brimming cups. On one occasion I remember the liquor was champagne, but, as a rule, our libations were of a more modest vintage. I have some recollection of our treating each other to threepennyworths of gin and cold water, and becoming much excited over that humble stimulant.

Our love for the twins was delightful, but it was attended with some expense. Sparrow and I exhausted all our pocket-money, and even mortgaged heavily our future incomes in our determination to appear attractively arrayed. Those were days when there prevailed a lively faith in bear's grease, and when richly anointed heads of hair were the vogue; when the curling-irons rectified nature's mistakes in the matter of straight locks; when lacquered boots were worn painfully pointed at the toe; when

waistcoats, much rolled in the region of the collar, were gorgeous of pattern, embossed, embroidered, and arabesqued; when it was impossible to assume trousers of too light a hue, or to strap them too tightly beneath the instep; when a gaudy satin stock bound the throat, and formed below it a sort of ornamental chest-plaster, in which it was permitted to stick jewelled pins of vast dimensions linked together by golden chains; when a camellia japonica in the button-hole was as a necessary of life. Happy times, but, as I have suggested, expensive for articulated clerks afflicted with the tender passion.

My love, I found, affected my parts of speech. At first I was curiously dumb in the presence of my heart's idol. When language returned to me it had a sort of Elizabethan or blank-verse quality. Ordinary modes of expression seemed inappropriate to the due imparting of my passion. The case demanded resort to the much neglected second personal singular. "Do you love me?" a man might say to a crowd. But "Dost thou love me?" could only be addressed to one, and was an inquiry of very special and individual interest.

A golden opportunity occurred. It was just before one of the dinners in Tavistock-square. I stood in the drawing-room window with Elly Blissett. We were partially screened by the window-curtains. I longed to drop on my knees before her. But there was the chance of being seen by others. Moreover, I had been driven to the conclusion that kneeling to one's mistress must of necessity have gone out of fashion when tightly strapped trousers came in.

"And dost thou love me?" I murmured in bass notes that I must have unconsciously borrowed from some popular tragedian of the period. "Wilt thou, indeed, be mine?"

"You're not a Quaker, are you, Mr. Stack?" said Elly, opening wide wondering blue eyes.

"Nay, hear me swear!" I continued.

"No, that's not like a Quaker!"

Dinner was announced. We were parted. I was somewhat discouraged. But assisted perhaps by the stimulating character of old Blissett's port, I determined upon a further effort after dinner, when, a trifle flushed by good cheer and incipient indigestion, the gentlemen rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room. I spoke again much to the same purport.

"You creature! Why that's exactly what I heard you say to Elly before dinner."

By great mischance I had this time ad-

ressed myself to Nelly instead of to Elly. Nelly was pounced upon by lynx-eyed Miss Columba, and was led to the piano to sing a duet with her sister. They were charming efforts the duets of the twins; but things perhaps rather to contemplate than to listen to.

Sparrow had heard my speech to Nelly. He was furious. I certainly think he had been indiscreet in his application to Mr. Blissett's port. We left the house together. He had commenced accusing and vilipending me in the hall, while we were searching for our hats. In the square outside he offered to fight me. "I hate fellows to be mean," he said. But for the appearance of a policeman I think we should have proceeded to violent measures. We parted upon the most angry terms.

When we met in the office next morning he renewed his reproaches. His wrath knew no bounds. He even hurled at me Jacobs's Law Dictionary, a heavy volume in every respect. I meditated flinging in return Chitty's Practice. Fortunately, perhaps, I was sent out suddenly to attend a summons for time to plead at the Judges' Chambers in Rolls Gardens. It may be that manslaughter was thus prevented.

For days we did not speak to each other, but only scowled fiercely when our glances chanced to meet. But soon a common sorrow reunited us. The Miss Blissetts left town, in the custody of their aunt, to sojourn some weeks at Ramsgate.

What were we to do? Our alarm was dire. A ghastly rumour obtained to the effect that our designs had been discovered, that it was because of us and our proceedings that Nelly and Elly had been removed from Tavistock-square. We yielded to despair. It was clear to us that the exquisite twins would fall a prey to the penniless adventurers, possibly of foreign extraction, and possessed of whiskers, who, we agreed, were for ever haunting English watering-places, bent upon abducting the loveliest of our countrywomen. No doubt we were also penniless, or might have been so described by adverse critics, but, then, how affluent we were in sublime sentiments, how deeply tender our emotions in regard to the heavenly twins!

"Fellows ought to act up to their opinions," said Sparrow, gloomily. "Fellows shouldn't go to work in an underhand way. Fellows should always apply direct to girls' parents in these cases."

"You mean that we ought to ask old Blissett for his daughters' hands in marriage?"

"That's what fellows would do who'd any pluck," he growled.

This was a taunt. True, it involved imputation upon himself. But that did not make it the less irritating. Our conversation became unpleasant again. The situation was of an exasperating kind. We interchanged insolences, charging each other with want of courage, goading each other on to deeds of desperation. Once more we were of accord. We would together beard old Blissett in his den—for so we spoke of his private room in Laurence Pountney-lane—and simultaneously lay our case before him.

We struck while the iron was hot. We rushed wildly into the presence of our principal. We spoke while our pulses beat feverishly. Somehow we made ourselves intelligible, and yet it must have been a very confused statement we rendered—a mad medley of words, breathlessly uttered. When one of us broke down the other took up the running, "I love Nelly" and "I love Elly" being the burden of our declarations respectively. A strange scene—a trifle ludicrous and absurd, as I now judge, but we thought gravely enough of it at the time.

Old Mr. Blissett surveyed us with aghast eyes. "Bless my soul!" he cried, a frequent ejaculation of his, and, as he was apt to do in moments of perplexity, he rubbed his bald scalp industriously with the palm of his hand. "One at a time, one at a time. What! are you both mad? Marry my girls! Marry Elly and Nelly!"

Such was the wish of our lives, we cried, the only hope that gave value to our existence. We begged him to bestow upon us Nelly and Elly, and bid us live. If he denied us his twins, why, then, our deaths would be at his door, and let him look to it. Something to that effect was our speech; erratic, perhaps, but tersely eloquent.

"Bless my soul! Give you Elly and Nelly! Why, you don't know one from the other!"

What of that? He didn't either.

"Don't be ridiculous!" he cried. "Besides, they're already engaged to be married."

"Engaged!" we shrieked in unison, noisily as a chorus in an opera by Verdi.

"Yes; and have been for some time. It's their aunt's doing. I have no doubt it's all right. I have had little or no concern in it. I left it altogether to their aunt. I have no doubt the marriages will prove happy ones."

How had I been mistaken in Miss Columba! She was a match-maker after all!

We demanded the names of the monsters in (presumably) human form who had robbed us of our brides; not, however, putting our inquiry quite in that form.

"Oddly enough," said Mr. Blissett, "they're going to marry twin brothers, whom they've known from childhood—wards of mine—Freddy and Eddy Fowler. They're the children of my client, the late Mr. Alderman Fowler, and entitled to a pretty property. They're most worthy young gentlemen, and as like as two peas. I don't know them apart, and I don't know which is which when they're together, and whether it's Freddy that's going to marry Elly, and Eddy Nelly, or whether Freddy takes Nelly and Eddy Elly; I don't believe they know themselves, and I'll be shot if I can tell you. Love-suits, you see, are sometimes quite as puzzling and intricate as chancery-suits, and there's no finding a clear way out of them. But the church will amicably adjust the matter one of these fine days, and there'll be no more to be said. All I know is, the parson who is called in to settle the case will have his work cut out for him, and will find it necessary to keep his eyes wide open, or there's certain to be an accident. But it will be his look-out. It's no affair of mine. So now don't talk any more nonsense, there's good lads, but get on with your work. When are you going to finish fair copying that State of Facts for the Master's Office in *Biffin v. Biffin*?"

"We were not born under Gemini," I said to Sparrow, moved by that feeling of despair which leads men to aggravate their own dismalness, and further mortify themselves by attempts at jokes upon their wretched condition. He did not heed me; perhaps he did not understand me. I think I have already stated that he was a young man from the West of England.

"Our twins marrying those other twins!" he moaned piteously. "Nelly and Elly, Freddy and Eddy—what frightful confusion! It oughtn't to be allowed. The police ought to interfere. The Court of Chancery ought to supply a remedy. Twins marrying twins! And suppose twins should come of the marriages?"

He nearly fell from his high stool; his voice wailed in agony; his facial expression was imbecile; he was becoming delicious: contemplating an endless vista of twin-born creatures, a fearful vision of bewildered generations, worlds of intricate embarrassment!

Our disappointment was crushing. For some time our anguish was extreme. But we got over it; we got over, indeed, or through, as the days went on, divers other troubles, trials, and states of suffering, including our terms of clerkship and our "exam" at the Law Institution. But the first discovery—mercifully it dawned upon us very gradually—that we were not quite so blighted as we had rather prided ourselves upon being, came to us as a kind of reproof. We smiled seldom and sadly at first, and only when we quite forgot that we ought rather to scowl. We rarely ventured to laugh in the presence of each other. We felt that we owed it to our ruined hopes and betrayed affections to preserve as long as possible much show of grief and severe melancholy of demeanour.

We were present as guests at the marriages of the Sisters Blissett with the Brothers Fowler; our mood was bitter, but it yielded presently, overcome perhaps by the sweetness of the champagne; and our mirth became somehow far less hollow after breakfast than it had been before.

One preciously malicious thought sustained us. We were persuaded that after all, quite at the last moment, a fatal irremediable mistake had occurred—the *wrong twins had been united!*

Whether this were really the case or no we never knew. But it pleased us greatly to think that it might so have happened.

"You'll want nothing more, sir?" asked the waitress, looking into the room; "we're going to bed now."

"Nothing," replied Arthur, "only don't close the house door, as I'm expecting a messenger from Mr. Gay!"

"Right you are, sir!" replied the girl, and went back to tell her friends in the kitchen that the strange guest was "busy with poils of love-letthers," while Arthur commenced the perusal of—

#### THE IRON CAGE.

It was at the time when all sorts of plots and conspiracies were being hatched at Venice, that a certain private individual, Luca Orioli by name, lived in the town along with his sister Brigida, who kept house for him, and looked after his wants. Brigida was altogether devoted to her brother, and seemed to live but for him, to attend to his comforts, and forward in all things whatever objects he had in view. There are some women like this, who devote themselves to others, and seem to lose

sight of themselves altogether. There are not too many of them, but they exist.

Orioli was by calling a missal painter, an illuminator of ancient manuscripts, but the concerns in which at the time I speak of he was entirely absorbed, were neither literary nor artistic. He was altogether occupied with politics, machinations against the existing government, plans for overthrowing it, and setting up in its place a commonwealth, in which equal rights were to be accorded to all, in which the highest noble in Venice was to enjoy no privileges whatever beyond those which were to be accorded to the meanest citizen in the town.

It was a most hazardous plot against the state in which this Orioli was engaged; he, and I know not how many others; some living at Venice, some elsewhere, at Chioggia, at Verona, at Ravenna even, who knows? At all events they were scattered hither and thither, and had to be communicated with, when any intelligence was to be made known to the fraternity, by letter. Altogether there was a deal of writing to be got through; not letters only, but reports, statements, projects drawn up on paper to be circulated among the different conspirators. And it was in copying such writings out, or taking down the matter of which they were to consist from her brother's lips, that Brigida made herself more useful than in almost any other way. The girl was an excellent writer, and could copy out a document so that it should be as readable as print. This was a rare accomplishment in those days, and Brigida was kept hard at it, you may be assured, writing from dictation, copying papers of which duplicates were wanted, and so on, all through the day, and part of the night as well.

But for all she was so hard worked, the young lady found time to do a little writing on her own account. The fact is, that the signorina had a lover, one Filippo, ordinarily called Lippo, Rinaldi, living at Padua, and with this young fellow she would correspond whenever she got a chance of sending a letter. She would write to him of everything that was going on, both of her brother's doings and her own, and very pretty letters they were, no doubt, and such as any young gentleman, as much in love as Lippo was, would be very glad to get.

This brother and sister lived, as I have heard the story told, in a little piazzetta at the back of the Riva dei Schiavoni, and not far from the church of St. Giorgio de Greci. It was an out-of-the-way kind of place, for it was very important for Orioli



that he should live as retired as possible, and be as much as possible unobserved by anybody. Here, then, it was that for the most part all those plots and machinations in which Orioli was so deeply implicated were concocted, and here, sometimes, one or more of the conspirators would come to confabulate with him, at times when there seemed to be the least chance of discovery.

One autumn afternoon the brother and sister were engaged in preparing a document to be sent to Verona by special messenger that night. As often happened, Luca was dictating, and his sister was writing. The light was fast fading, and Brigida had established herself close to the window to take advantage of all that was to be had. Orioli was at the window too, but he was standing, leaning his forehead against one of the cross mullions which enclosed the small panes of glass, and gazing out into the little piazza behind the house, which had, it may be mentioned, two entrances, one giving on the piazzetta, and the other on one of the small canals which intersect the town in all directions. There was little light in the room except just close to the window, and the gathering darkness held undisputed possession of the other end of the apartment.

Orioli stood and looked out on the piazzetta, but his eyes took in, as far as he was conscious, nothing of the scene before him. He was absorbed in the letter which he was dictating to his sister, and which related to a final meeting of the brotherhood to which he belonged, which was to take place in a few days, and the time, place, and object of which he was notifying to his Veronese friend. Now and then he would pause in the work of dictation, to say a few words to his sister on some subject connected with the matter in hand.

"Brigida," he said, on one of these occasions, "I think I was followed last night when I parted from Tito Grimani and his brother Bartolommeo, in the enclosure at the back of the palace. The vile spies and secret officers of the senate are everywhere, and I surely think that I detected one of them dogging my footsteps last night."

Brigida looked quickly up from her writing with anxious, frightened eyes.

"I am always fearing it," she said. "Dear Luca, the thought that this plot will one day be discovered, and that you will be taken and imprisoned, is for ever haunting me. How I wish that the old days, before you had become involved in any of these terrible risks, were back again!"

At this moment a slight noise in the room attracted Luca's attention, and turning hastily from the window, and looking into that part of the apartment which was involved in comparative obscurity, he was able to detect the shadowy forms of three men, whom he felt at once were servants of the state.

"We come to arrest you as head conspirator in a plot against the lawful authority of the Venetian senate," said the chief officer, stepping forward out of the obscurity.

The Venetian senate in those days made short work of the trial of political offenders. There were so many of these that the government, in its alarm for its own safety, dealt out severe justice to all such who got within its reach. The evidence against Luca Orioli was irresistibly strong, and it being considered that an opportunity of "making an example" was afforded by his detection, it was determined that a punishment should be resorted to in his instance which was only used very rarely, and principally in cases which were marked by especial atrocity: parricides, persons who were convicted of sacrilege, monks or nuns who had broken their vows, and the like exceptionally gross offenders. The punishment in question consisted in being hung out in an iron cage which was suspended from the top of the great bell-tower or Campanile of Venice, and in which the victim was suffered to perish miserably of starvation and exposure. This was the horrible penalty which was awarded to Luca Orioli.

But what was the saddest part of all—and it was certainly felt to be so by Luca himself—was that his sister, his poor little Brigida, was convicted of complicity with him in this disastrous plot, and was condemned to share his punishment.

It was that skill of hers in penmanship which had ruined her. All sorts of documents of the most compromising character, plans of action to be adopted by the leading conspirators, letters to them from Luca himself on matters connected with the plot, which, though intrusted to careful hands for delivery, had fallen into the clutches of the numerous spies who were always on the look-out for such papers, a great mass of such writings had been seized, and proved beyond doubt to be in the young girl's handwriting; proved, indeed, by comparison with the piece of writing on which she was actually engaged at the moment when the officers of justice made their arrest of Luca.

The crushing weight with which this implication of his little sister fell on Luca, can hardly be described in words. Brigida—Brida as he always called her—had been so many years under his care, her parents having died in her childhood, and was so much his junior, that he had got to regard her almost more as a daughter than as a sister, so much did a feeling of care for her, and a sense that she was a creature to be sheltered from all harm, and protected by him at all cost, pervade all the relations between the two. Nay, it is impossible to say whether the physical difference between them—for Luca was a big powerful man, while Brida was slightly and delicately formed in an uncommon degree—may not have helped to strengthen this feeling on the brother's part, that to keep his little sister out of harm's way was one of the chief occupations of his life.

That this frail creature should be involved through him in so terrible a calamity was to Orioli a thought which was entirely insupportable. Her constitution was delicate, as her frame was, and there could be little doubt that the exposure to the cold and damp, for it was now late autumn, must cause her the extremest suffering. Death, of course, was inevitable for both, as they were to hang there in the iron cage till famine did its work, but that she should suffer as well as die—! It was too terrible, and the earnest and passionate appeal which Luca made to the judges on his sister's behalf—he had made no such appeal for himself—might have touched, one would have thought, even harder hearts than those to which he had to address himself.

"It is my doing, and mine only," he cried, at last. "She did what I told her—miserable that I am. On me let the penalty fall—a double penalty if you choose. Let me be tortured, burnt at a slow fire, anything, only spare her, my little Brigida, a creature incapable of harming any one, and whose love for her brother has been her only fault."

But he spoke to men of stone when he addressed that pitiless assembly in the dimly-lighted council chamber of the Doge's Palace. The fiat had gone forth, and must be obeyed. She was sentenced, and must suffer.

A damp cold night at the end of October. An iron cage hung out upon a crane-like arm projecting from the top of the great belfry tower of Venice, and in it were the two malefactors who had incurred the

wrath of the Venetian senate. The cage and its occupants had been hung out a little before sunset, and while the light lasted the people in the piazza below had stood about the base of the pillar gazing up at the uncommon sight.

There was not much to see. Little could be made out at that height of the two figures in the cage; the structure itself, and its occupants, looking not much bigger than a bird-cage with a couple of linnets inside. Still the people knew that human creatures were up there, and they gazed so long as the light lasted, and not till it had quite faded did the last of them go away. The cage would be there the next day, however, "that was one comfort," and after that who could tell how long. There would be a couple of corpses in it one day instead of these living creatures. The spectacle would be more interesting, if possible, then even than now.

Hand in hand, the brother and sister sat crouching on the floor of the cage, quiet, resigned, and waiting for the end. They spoke but seldom, a word or two now and then, an attempt to encourage each other; then there would come a long pause, while they took half unconscious note of the scene around, above, below. Mechanically their eyes dwelt on the near details of the huge column to which their prison was suspended, the ornamentation which looked so smooth and elaborate from below, but here close by seemed quite rough and unfinished. The stars burnt above them, the twinkling lights came out in the city below, the dark lagoon stretched out as far as they could see, the tower and belfries of the town showed dimly above the other buildings, but none came near in height to the great Campanile from which they hung, and which, when the bells rang out, seemed positively to sway with the vibration of the deafening sound.

They were utterly wearied and exhausted. It was cold, and the damp rose from the canal and the lagoon, and seemed to chill them to the bone. Poor little Brigida shivered involuntarily from time to time. The absence of all hope—all possibility of deliverance—seemed to depress her vital power, and produced a degree of chill which the actual condition of the temperature did not account for.

"My poor Brida," said Luca, tenderly, looking kindly on her in the dim light, "they might have spared you. What a conspirator," he added, smiling bitterly, "what a dangerous subject. Oh!" he cried, his tone changing suddenly, "that

something could be done to deliver you from this dreadful fate!"

"Do you wish me away, then, Luca?" She paused a moment, and her thoughts went back to happier times. "Luca," she went on, "how happy we used to be before you were mixed up with these dreadful plots and conspiracies, when you used to work all day at your beautiful missals, and I sat by you making the patterns which you had designed on my embroidery; and Lippo, who used to be with us so often. Poor Lippo! I wonder what he is doing, and if he got the letter which I sent to him after you were arrested——"

She stopped abruptly as her brother started up from the crouching position in which he had lain so long, causing the cage to swing violently to and fro by the sudden movement.

"What was that?" he cried. "Something rushed by me in the air; was it a bird? It came quite near my head."

"Again," he cried, after a short interval. "Ah! it is not a bird. It is—it is an arrow!"

"An arrow?" echoed Brigida; "what can that mean?" The moon had come out brightly just at this time from behind a cloud, and they both gazed down on the piazza. The sky was covered again presently, and everything was indistinct, but Brigida thought she had made out something like the figure of a man in the great square, near the base of the column. "What can it mean?" said Brigida again.

"It means," replied her brother, "that we are hung up here as a mark to be shot at. But in the dark, why in the dark?"

Brigida shuddered involuntarily and drew nearer to her brother. "I hope they will kill me first," she said.

The words were hardly out of her mouth when a third arrow came whizzing through the air. This time it struck Luca full on the shoulder.

"They aim well by this dim light," he said. "Strange," he added, after a pause, "the arrow hit me full, and yet it has not pierced my skin, nor, I think, made any wound. But what is this?" he added a moment afterwards. A line had fallen across his arm, and as he drew one end of it to him he found that it was attached to the arrow which had struck him. "The arrow is blunted at the end, and there is a silken line attached to it."

Quick in her woman's wit, quicker still in her love instinct, Brigida saw in an instant what had happened. "It is from Lippo," she cried; "you know what a good

marksman he is. I knew he would help us."

"There is something fastened to the line," said Luca, pulling it swiftly into the cage. "It is heavy," he continued, "and gets heavier as I draw it nearer. It is a rope!"

An exclamation of relief burst from brother and sister at once. It was followed, as often happens, by a reaction.

"But the cage," cried Brigida. "How can we get out?"

"Easily," was the reply. "They have thought that the height from the ground was safeguard enough against any attempt to escape, and have not considered it necessary to place the bars very near together. A little squeezing, dear, and we shall get that small body of yours through between these two bars, which by some accident have got more forced apart than the others."

Brigida shuddered involuntarily, but her brother allowed her no time for reflection. Rapidly, but skilfully, he fastened one end of the rope to the cage, and then tenderly, but very securely, wound the other end about his sister's body.

"How terrible it looks," said the girl, gazing down into the darkness below. "Luca," she cried as if a sudden thought had struck her, "you will let me down, but who will let you down?"

"I shall descend the rope hand over hand, as I have done scores of times for pastime at the gymnasium. It is nothing to me."

"Oh, Luca, are you sure? And the bars. If I can get through them, which seems hardly possible, are you sure you can, dear?"

"I am as slippery as an eel," he answered with a forced laugh, and shall get through as easily as possible. "Come, dear," he added, hurriedly, "there is not a moment to lose. The rope is safely round you, it cannot slip. Now, dear, courage—a little pain in squeezing through, and you are safe."

He gave her, in his merciful consideration, no time to think, and very firmly, but with such care as a surgeon uses when subjecting his patient to inevitable pain, he forced her through the opening between the bars, which at the particular part might have been perhaps from seven to seven and a half inches asunder.

"Oh Luca, Luca," cried the girl, "take me back, you will never, never be able to follow me. You are so much bigger. Take me back, and let me stay with you to the end."

She struggled and clung to the cage, but Luca would not listen to her. He detached her hands from the bars, only too easily, for she was half fainting, then he leaned over and kissed her head, and then with rapid but cautious action paid out the rope through the bars.

When Brigida reached the termination of her hazardous journey she was insensible, and it was in that state that Lippo received her into his arms. By the time she was released from the rope which was bound about her body, the poor girl had regained possession of her senses. Lippo's first care, after almost suffocating his recovered treasure with caresses, was to provide for Brigida's immediate escape. He had a boat ready in the canal close by, manned by a couple of boatmen whom he could implicitly trust, and he was for hurrying her away at once, lest any of the officers of the night-watch, in making their rounds, should enter the piazza. But Lippo's entreaties, usually so powerful with Brigida, were in this case of no avail. Till Luca was free of the cage, and stood there beside her, nothing would induce her to consult her own safety. She would fly with him or not at all, and the utmost that Lippo's persuasion could effect was to induce her to hide herself, within a recess in the great building which flanked the south side of the square, and came near to the Campanile's base.

The girl was, in truth, in an agony of apprehension lest that escape from the cage, which, even in her case, had been effected with so much difficulty, should for her brother be a thing altogether impracticable. With every moment that passed this terrible apprehension gained increase of strength. As to what Luca himself was about, neither she nor Lippo could do more than form the vaguest conjectures. At that height, and in the darkness, they could see nothing but the general outline of the cage against the sky. They could make out, too, that the rope was violently agitated and shaken, evidently owing to the movement imparted to the cage by the efforts of its occupant to force himself through the bars. But time passed, and there was still no indication of that descending figure for which they were looking with such absorbing eagerness, and Brigida could no longer resist a sickening conviction that her worst fears were realised.

"Oh," she cried, "why did I leave him? It was selfish, it was cruel. I knew he could not get through. Those large, strong shoulders of his"—and here, so strangely

are we constituted, came out a touch of sisterly pride—"would never pass through that small opening. Lippo," she cried, almost angrily, "can you do nothing? Why did you shoot that arrow? Why did you take me away from him? Poor, noble brother, he only cared about me. Lippo," she cried again, petulantly, "there must be something more possible. Quick, the night is passing away, and when daylight comes it will be too late."

Lippo cast one look up towards the cage, and mechanically stretched out his hand to the silken cord which hung down still from the cage by the side of the rope. As he touched it he seemed to conceive a new idea.

"There is hope yet," he said. "Only stay here, keep within the shadow of the wall, and wait, with what patience you can, till I return."

He did not stop for her answer, but dashed off across the piazza at his utmost speed.

What a time was that which followed! Brigida was alone, alone at the foot of the column, at the top of which her well-loved brother was still encaged. She could not communicate with him. She had no one at all to speak to or take counsel with. It was one of those dreadful cases in which the severest part of the trial is the necessity of total inaction. It was almost unbearable. She longed to speak. She longed to call aloud to her brother; to entreat him not to despair. She felt that he had abandoned all thoughts of escape. The rope hung quietly now, showing that no movement was taking place in the cage. Oh that she could know what this quietness meant! Was he waiting, patient, resigned, for the end? Did he think she had abandoned him, and that she had consulted her own safety in flight? No, he could not believe that. Or had some dreadful thing happened? Had he got fixed between the bars?—was he strangled, suffocated?

The suspense was horrible, but it must be borne. Brigida was possessed of the priceless gift of good sense. She was wise as well as loving. She must be quiet, she must keep herself concealed, as she had been told to do. Everything—her brother's fate especially—depended on her not being found. She must keep within the shadow of that piece of masonry behind which Lippo had hidden her, and wait.

Once she stole out to the foot of the Campanile. The rope by which she had descended hung out away from the pillar, and if any one came by the place would attract attention. She got hold of it,



and twisted and entwined it among some of the projecting decorations about the base of the column, so that it should be less conspicuous. Then she crept back and hid herself once again.

Even at that hour—it was between two and three in the morning—St. Mark's Place was not entirely deserted. A couple of belated Venetians crossed the square just after she had got back to her hiding-place. They came quite near to where she was concealed, and stood looking up at the column, evidently occupied with the topic of the moment, which, indeed, all Venice was talking about. "It is the girl I pity most," she heard one of the men say, just as they passed out of hearing. She was, indeed, at this moment, perhaps, most to be pitied. After the two men came a party of the watch on their rounds. They came near to the foot of the Campanile, and Brigida's heart almost stood still with terror.

"They seem quiet enough up there," said one of the men.

"Quiet? Yes; I should think so," rejoined another. "I shouldn't wonder if one of them, at any rate, was quiet in death. The girl looked more than half dead before she was put up there."

"I wonder they haven't placed a sentry here by the Campanile," said one of the men, who had not spoken before.

"Why, what would be the use of a sentry?" retorted the first speaker. "How do you think they could get out of the cage? And do you suppose that, even if they did, they could make a hop, skip, and a jump of it from the top of the Campanile, which is more than three hundred feet high, to the bottom? A sentry, indeed!"

The sergeant in command of the party interposed at this juncture with the word to march, and the little band passed on. They left poor Brigida with new matter for alarm. What if a sentry should yet be placed there? What if the watch should come round again? What if her brother should be able to get out, and they should appear as he was in the act of descending?

This inaction was terrible. Brigida felt as if she must do something. She would go to the foot of the pillar and call aloud to her brother. She would go and meet Lippo. No; she would do none of these things. She would control herself with all her might, and keep close there in her dark corner till she could do something that would be really useful. She would—Ah, there was Lippo. Now something would be done, at any rate.

"Where have you been? What have

you done?" she cried, as soon as he was within hearing of her.

"I have been home to fetch this," he answered, holding up a file. "Luca must file through one of the bars at the top. Then he will be able to bend it aside, and pass through."

"Oh, but is there time?"

"The day will not begin to break for an hour."

Even while he was speaking Lippo was engaged in fastening the little instrument on which so much depended to the silken cord, which still hung down by the side of the column. This done, he gave the line one or two sharp pulls to attract the attention of the occupant of the cage.

"Thank God he is alive at least," murmured Brigida, as the line with the file attached to it was swiftly drawn up from above.

And now, indeed, there followed a time when the suspense endured by those who waited below amounted to something little short of agony. It was vain for them to strain their eyes into the darkness; they could make out nothing of what was going on above. It was vain to listen for the sound of the file; it was a windy night, and so slight a noise could not be heard at that distance. Then there was the ever-present fear lest some one should, even at that unlikely hour, appear on the piazza. The watch, again on their rounds, passed by once more with lights and their arms glittering, but this time they did not come so close to the column as they did before. Presently afterwards a drunken fellow came by and insisted on talking to Lippo in a disastrously friendly strain. He stayed so long, and was so garrulous on the subject of the cage and its occupants, that Lippo could only get him to leave the place by going with him, returning alone at his utmost speed as soon as he had lured the talkative sot safely out of the square.

Meanwhile the night, or rather the morning, was wearing on. It was the time of year when the darkness is long in giving place to daylight, and there was as yet no hint even of approaching dawn. Only the striking of the hours from the neighbouring clocks told our two watchers of the near approach of dawn, and made them tremble. They almost counted the minutes now, so precious had they become. If once the city began to wake up, and the people to stir abroad, the escape of Luca from his prison would be impossible. There was no indication of any such thing as yet, but the time was, nevertheless, near at hand when the world would wake up

for the day, and the life of Venice begin afresh.

While Lippo and Brigida were waiting at the column's foot, turning these things over and over in their thoughts, they were suddenly startled by the sound of some object falling, with a metallic clinking sound, on the pavement of the square. Everything that befel now was of the most prodigious moment, and Lippo rushed to the spot, and falling on his knees on the ground made eager search for the object, whatever it might be, whose fall had produced the sound. An exclamation of dismay brought Brigida to his side. He was holding in his hand the file which so short a time before they had seen drawn up to the top of the column.

"What is it that has happened?" faltered Brigida. Her faculties were in some sort benumbed by long tension, and she could not understand, only felt that something was wrong.

"He has dropped it while at work," replied Lippo. "We must send it up to him again; but how? The silken cord is drawn up—ah, there is the rope!"

As Lippo spoke, he looked up and saw what seemed to take the very power of speaking away from him. He stretched out his hand, and seizing Brigida by the wrist, pointed upward towards the top of the column.

A dim faint glimmer of approaching dawn was just beginning to make itself felt rather than seen, in the eastern quarter of the sky. It was not dawn yet, only the first hint of the coming morning twilight, enough to give some slight additional distinctness to any object that stood out against the sky, and no more. The true daybreak, which was presently to bathe the whole of the heavens in loveliest pellucid light, was near at hand, but it was not there yet.

When Brigida looked up in the direction indicated by her lover, she could at first see nothing but the mighty pile of masonry at whose foot she was standing, black and enormous against the sky; but, as she continued to gaze, she became presently conscious that high up in the air, suspended between earth and heaven, there hung some object which moved, and swung, and swayed this way and that as it descended, for it *was* descending, towards the still distant earth.

The file had done its work.

Mechanically she fell upon her knees, it was only in that attitude that she could await the end, and, with clasped hands, gazed upwards at that slowly descending

form, which now with every inch of nearer approach became more distinctly and more surely recognisable.

My little story has reached its end. As soon as Luca reached the ground, after safely accomplishing his perilous descent, the three made off, with such speed as belongs to those who fly for life, to the boat which was awaiting them, and, long before their flight had been suspected, or the fact proclaimed that the iron cage was empty, its late occupants were far away from terrible Venice, and safe from their pursuers. And in due time the old days of the missal painting and embroidering were revived, only the scene was in a tranquil Dutch town, and Lippo, now the husband of happy little Brigida, was a permanent part of the establishment.

THE next manuscript had a pencil indorsement by Cameron, "Told to me by Dr. Barr," and was called—

#### FACE TO FACE.

##### I.

My first meeting with Mr. Owen Curtis, barrister-at-law, happened a good many years ago. He was junior counsel for the plaintiff in an action for damages brought against a railway company. There had been a collision on the line, and his client, a passenger, had sustained severe injuries. I was one of the medical witnesses.

There had been a medical consultation in order that the counsel engaged might be thoroughly instructed as to the technical and scientific questions arising from the evidence. It devolved upon Curtis to master these details of the case so that he might duly prompt his leader as the trial proceeded. I had, therefore, several interviews with the junior counsel, and I remember being much struck with his quickness of perception, and the soundness of his judgment in deciding upon the points to be specially urged upon the jury. He had little scientific knowledge to begin with, but his trained intelligence, his retentive memory, and logical method, stood him in good stead. He acquitted himself admirably. It was mainly owing to his exertions that the jury were so liberal in their award of compensation to his client. His leader—who only came into court to deliver his speeches—warmly thanked him, and the judge particularly complimented him. I make mention of these facts with a view to the character and qualities of the man being the better comprehended.

The case over, it so chanced that I met Curtis again and again. There was at no time the intimacy of friendship subsisting between us, but rather a good sort of understanding, based, I suppose, upon mutual esteem and professional consideration. If I ever needed legal help I felt sure of obtaining it at his hands; so, if he wanted medical advice, I took it for granted he would come to me.

Still, even in this informal way I could hardly count him as a patient, for he so rarely ailed anything. He was a tall, large-framed, middle-aged man, of active habits, and with every appearance of great physical strength. His complexion was swarthy, his features were massive but regular, his eyes large and dark, without being remarkably brilliant. His forehead was broad, and looked lower than it really was, from his wearing his thick brown-black hair falling forward upon it in heavy masses. He was usually rather careless about his dress, but altogether his aspect was decidedly that of a gentleman.

He called upon me rather late one night, begging me to pardon his so doing on the ground that he greatly desired to consult me, and to occupy more of my time, perhaps, than I could conveniently devote to him earlier in the day. I was alone, and I hastened to assure him that my services were quite at his disposal. He looked anxious and jaded, I noted, and his manner was certainly agitated. His hand was tremulous and feverishly hot. His voice was weak and husky, and he seemed to have unusual difficulty in expressing himself. I confess, it occurred to me that he had been dining too freely. Presently, however, I was able to dismiss this notion. He grew more composed, and succeeded in controlling the nervous excitement which had at first appeared to affect him. I judged him to be suffering from over-fatigue and excessive application to his professional duties. He admitted that his health was but indifferent, that his appetite now often failed him, and that, of late, his sleep had been much disturbed. My advice was of the kind usual under the circumstances. I recommended rest, change of air and scene, with some recourse to tonic treatment. He nodded his head, and implied that he had been fully prepared to receive advice of that nature.

"But there's more in it than you think," he said, after a pause, during which his agitation returned to him. "I have not told you all. It's not ordinary assistance that I ask of you. I came to you be-

cause I felt sure that you would, in the first place, listen to me calmly and patiently, and next, having heard me, would not be in a hurry, as many men would be, to set me down as stark mad. Please understand the expression literally—*stark mad*."

"Certainly not," I said, with a start, wondering at his words. He was much moved, and had the air of one constraining himself to make a painful confession. But in look and manner he manifested no trace of mental disorder.

"Yet," he resumed, "to pronounce me of unsound mind would only be a reasonable conclusion. If my case were another's I should certainly not hesitate so to decide. Indeed, I have the greatest difficulty, as it is, in divesting myself of the conviction that I am, to speak plainly, going mad. More, that on one subject, on one only, so far as I can at present determine, I am already mad.

I ventured to suggest that morbid imaginings of the kind he mentioned were frequently due to the depression of spirits which accompanies derangement of the physical system, exhaustion of strength, and undue concentration of the mental faculties; that with the renovation of his general health, I had no doubt, these particular fancies of his, however distressing and acute they might now be, would speedily depart.

"But you will not decline to listen to me?" he asked.

I said I thought it would be more prudent to leave the matter at rest, for the present at any rate, and I asked him to let me see him again after he had followed my prescriptions and permitted himself an interval of retirement and repose. We could then, I added, if the necessity for so doing still existed, go fully into the subject he had referred to. This proposal did not content him, however.

"There is no time to lose," he said, excitedly. "Already I may have delayed too long. It is hard to speak on this matter, even to you; but it is harder still to keep silence. The burden of doubt and fear I have been bearing is becoming quite insupportable to me. Think what my position is. I feel that at any moment I may be charged with being insane, and I am conscious that I have no sufficient answer to the charge. Still I feel myself competent and sane enough to discuss the subject, to reason upon it, as though the case were not my own, but another man's. How long shall I be able to do so? Who can

say? In justice to myself I ought to speak now."

"But surely," I said, "you are attaching exaggerated importance to a passing fancy, generated by ill health, which will soon, of itself, wholly cease to trouble you."

"Judging, then, by what you know and can now see of me, putting aside what I have just now said, you would pronounce me sane?"

"Unquestionably," I answered.

"I should think so too, but for one circumstance. My health, as I have told you, is not so good as formerly, still I do not find my capacity for work affected to any appreciable extent. I have been much occupied of late, but not excessively so. I can detect no decline of my professional reputation. My clients still trust me, the attorneys still bring me work. Ask any man at the bar and he will tell you that I am held in general esteem as a 'rising junior.' I believe even now the Chancellor would give me 'silk' if I cared to move towards taking it. You yourself would probably not hesitate to follow my legal opinion if you were in any difficulty. So far then I am not less sane than my fellows. But now comes my—what am I to call it? Let me employ a mild term, and say delusion. You will let me speak of it?"

I could not refuse.

"Granting me sane then, otherwise, in one respect I am strangely, terribly at fault. I'll be as brief as I may. When I look in the glass what ought I to see?"

"Your own image, of course."

"The reflection of a dark man, full-faced, with strongly marked features and nearly black hair?"

"Exactly."

His description of himself was sufficiently accurate.

"Well, I see nothing of the kind."

"What then do you see?"

He hesitated a little; then he said with some effort:

"When I look in the glass, it seems to me that quite another face than mine looks out of the glass at me."

"And this face——"

"I can scarcely describe it. But it's not my face; it is different in form, colour, expression, in every respect."

"But this is surely an optical delusion."

"It is rather, I think, a fatal hallucination, or evidence of diseased brain."

"You have looked in a defective plate. Your mind is ill at ease. Your nerves have been unstrung. You have surrendered yourself to some complete misconception."

"Such would be no doubt a satisfactory explanation of a delusion of the kind in an ordinary case. But I may say that I am not weakly constituted in mind or body. I am wholly without the imaginative faculty. I am hardened against fanciful influences. I am by nature, by education, and by professional habit, strictly a practical, reasoning, and common-sense creature. I am incapable of giving sudden and rash credence to an idea of this kind, of accepting it without the most resolute resistance, the fullest examination. It is no affair of a defective looking-glass peered into by a frightened, imaginative, credulous man. I have tried the thing again and again. I have tested it in every way I could think of. I have studied and investigated it as I would a case formally submitted to me for a legal opinion. I have cross-examined it, if I may so express myself, as I would a suspicious witness. Candidly, then, am I a man likely to be mistaken as to my experiences in this matter?"

I felt bound to admit that I believed him to be as little likely as myself to be readily deceived in such a case.

"I have tried the thing not in one possibly defective glass as you have suggested, but in five hundred glasses."

"With the same result?"

"Always with the same result."

There was a glass over the mantelpiece in my room. I stood up before it.

"Look here," I said, "and tell me what you see." He came to my side. "You see my reflection to begin with? Is there anything wrong with that?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Now turn to your own. What do you see?"

"The face I have spoken of. Not mine, nothing like mine, but another man's; a face I have seen only in the glass when I have looked to find my own."

"It is like no face you have ever seen before?"

"It is like no face I have ever seen before even in my dreams. I am not mistaken in this matter. I am not the victim of an optical delusion. I know what my own face is like. This is not the case of an ugly old woman studying her glass, and expecting to find herself young and beautiful. I am indifferent as to my general appearance. It would not pain me to hear myself pronounced hideous and misshapen. Still I know this is not my face. What that is like I have satisfied myself. I made it my business to satisfy myself." He produced a packet of photographs. "Here are



various portraits of myself, more or less successful. I can recognise them all as portraits of myself. No one bears the slightest resemblance to the face I now see in the glass exactly opposite me."

"And you cannot describe it?"

"Rather say that I can give no description of it that at all satisfies me in regard to accuracy and completeness. But I am, as you know, or perhaps as you do not know, something of an artist. I can boast a certain facility in sketching. Well, I have frequently endeavoured to sketch this face that looks out at me from my looking-glass. I have not wholly succeeded. Something of expression and air escapes my art, defies my pencil. Still what I have drawn may help you to conceive the kind of face I see, and will convince you that it is nothing like my own or any distortion or mistaken view of it. I have made several sketches, all failing, however, in some respects. Whether it proves more my sanity or my insanity I cannot decide, but I may state that I have made these drawings, calmly and deliberately, with little more excitement than I should feel in taking a sketchy portrait of some person quite indifferent to me—a bystander in court, let me say."

It struck me as, in any case, decidedly creditable to the strength of his nervous system that he should have been able composedly to make a drawing of the spectre, if it was so to be called, he believed to be haunting him.

"This face you speak of occasions you no alarm, then?" I inquired.

"I am not emotional, and I am not easily alarmed. In itself, the face I see where I should of right see my own, does not much disturb me, except inasmuch as it is to be accounted a symptom of diseased brain, and as it compels me to suspect my state of mind. At first I was merely affected by a sense of strangeness and uneasiness. I was hopeful that the delusion—for so, I suppose, I must call it, though it is to me a matter of most indisputable fact—would sooner or later fade and depart, that I should overcome and banish it by sheer strength of intellect and force of volition. This has not happened. I have grown, therefore, vexed, discomfited, tormented beyond measure. You will say that I might escape this delusion—this *thing*—by avoiding looking-glasses. No doubt. A looking-glass is a small matter to me, and I could live well enough without one. But then you must understand the constant, unremitting temptation to test my mental con-

dition—to ascertain whether I am or not still the victim of this extraordinary visitation. I am for ever asking myself, am I mad or not? Is the spectre still there? Shall I see myself or another if I turn to the glass? My strength is yielding. I feel myself gradually borne down. So I come to tell you of my state, and to ask if you can help me, feeling satisfied that knowing me as you do, you would not hurriedly, or without due listening to me, form an opinion in the matter."

His manner was perfectly rational, and, allowing for the very natural distress he experienced in speaking of a condition of things that, as he well knew, impeached his own sanity, he could not have stated a case in court with more calmness and lucidity.

I turned to examine his drawings. They were slight, free-handed sketches in pen and ink, exhibiting considerable artistic skill, of a very curious-looking head. Certainly there was scarcely a shadow of resemblance in this portrait to Curtis's own face, except, perhaps, in regard to the regularity of the features. The expression was one of acute suffering. It seemed to me the portrait of a man many years older than Curtis, gaunt, emaciated, broken down by prolonged care and anguish. The skin appeared so tightly drawn over the bones of the face, that it wore quite a skull-like look. The eyes were deeply sunken, yet gleamed like burning coals from out the dark shadow of the overhanging brows. The hair was thin, long, and disordered, blanched apparently by time and sorrow. It was, indeed, a dreadful face, with something unhuman, unearthly, and appalling in the ghastliness and ghostliness of its air and presence. Its looks haunted me long after I had put away from me the drawings. The more I considered them the more a sense of awe and repulsion grew upon me. And this was the face Curtis was for ever seeing in the place of his own in the looking-glass! No wonder, strong man though he was, he had become cowed at last, had felt his brain yielding, had surrendered himself to something like terror.

"Well?" he asked.

For some moments I remained silent. What could I say?

"What do you think of my case?"

The word "monomania" was on my lips, but I refrained from uttering it. Was he, in truth, mad, or was he, as he had himself suggested, the victim of some extraordinary and supernatural visitation?

I begged that he would allow me time to consider the matter fully, and to form a deliberate opinion. I urged him, meanwhile, to give himself repose and change, at any rate.

A fortnight afterwards I received a brief note from him. He did not refer to the subject of our conversation, but bade me adieu for some months. He had undertaken, it appeared, a commission to examine witnesses in a distant colony. He looked forward to the voyage greatly benefiting his health. His letter was in all respects that of a sane man. For years I had no tidings of him whatever.

## II.

"I HAVE fewer patients than usual just now," said my friend Doctor Gurwood one day. I was visiting his establishment at Twickenham. "I suppose I ought to congratulate myself on the success of my curative system. Yet now and then I come across a case that baffles me altogether. I will show you a patient who quite defies my skill. He has been some time in my charge, but his state is, I fear, wholly irremediable. I should be glad to have your opinion."

Doctor Gurwood, I should state, was an authority on brain disease, and famous for his successful treatment of the insane.

"The present form of the patient's malady is settled melancholia, with its most difficult and distressing incidents; and these are aggravated by great physical prostration. He is quite harmless. Of acute dementia I have for some time been unable to discover any trace remaining. But his constitution is terribly shattered, and any attempts to rouse the mental faculties have been altogether vain. I have removed as far as possible all restraint and surveillance. I have endeavoured, according to my usual practice in such cases, to bring the patient within the operation of the most kindly, domestic, social, and humanising influences. But the results have, I confess, disappointed me. I fear I can do little more now than leave Nature to work out her own ends. You shall judge for yourself."

He led the way to a small, but well-lit and neatly furnished apartment on an upper floor of the house. In an arm-chair by the window there reclined the motionless, frail, shrunken figure of a man, his head bowed so that the chin rested upon his chest, and his thin wasted hands outstretched, flaccid and helpless, in front of him. I judged him to be sixty years of age. His complexion was of a waxen white: his features looked sharp and rigid from attenuation; he seemed to me more like a carving in ivory than a

creature of flesh and blood. His lips were hueless; his hair, rough and unkempt, harsh and dry in quality, was of an ashen grey. Indeed, the way in which all colour, save of a neutral sort, appeared to have faded from the man as from a dead flower, was one of his most marked characteristics.

"A very hopeless case, I fear," said the physician, after a few moments. He half drew down one of the window-blinds, by way, as it seemed to me, of doing something to excite the attention of the patient. It was in vain, however. The figure remained still as a corpse. He addressed some few words to it, a common-place inquiry. It made no answer.

"This is not one of our good days by any means," said Doctor Gurwood. Gently he touched the man on the shoulder. The figure started a little, raised its head until slowly its eyes came level with the doctor's face. Such strange staring eyes; fierce, and yet blank-looking, from their lack of all human intelligence. There was no recognition in them; there scarcely seemed indeed to be speculation. They were as the wide-open yet purblind eyes of some wild creature dazed by the daylight.

But I then knew, what before had occurred to me involuntarily only as a strange and distressing suspicion. I recognised—I found myself compelled to recognise—the face before me. It was the face Curtis had sketched, the face that haunted him, that, as he had avowed, looked out at him from his looking-glass!

"He never speaks. He will rarely take food except upon compulsion. Yet this obstinacy no longer arises from suicidal mania. All inclination of that kind has long since abated, and I am under no apprehension of its return, so far as its more violent symptoms are concerned, at any rate. He gives little trouble now. But his state does not yield in any appreciable degree to my treatment."

"And you think nothing more can be done for him?"

"I know of nothing. Have you any suggestion to offer? But, indeed, it's clear to me that the man is rapidly sinking."

"You know his story?"

"I have full particulars in my books. I always make it a condition that I am thoroughly informed of a patient's antecedents, and, so far as they can be ascertained, the exciting causes of his malady."

We were now in Doctor Gurwood's private room. He referred to one of the volumes ranged in front of his desk.

"I see he has been now a long time

under my charge, a much longer time than I had thought. His age is forty-six; a barrister by profession; his name Owen Curtis."

I started. The doctor continued turning over the leaves of his book as he spoke.

"I remember all the facts of the case now. He was at one time in very good practice—was highly thought of at the bar. He left England on a commission to examine witnesses at Port Phillip in a case of some importance. His journey was fruitless, however; the case never came into court, but was suddenly compromised. Curtis had been for some time in ailing health. He remained in Australia, and, after an interval, practised at the colonial bar. He had great success, and his prospects were excellent. He was a general favourite; but then occurred an unfortunate accident which I see I have registered here as 'exciting cause of mental alienation.' I can't but think there must have been predisposing conditions, however. It seems he was retained to defend a prisoner on a capital charge. It was a case of murder, or suspected murder, which had occasioned very general excitement in the colony. Curtis was chargeable at most with an error of judgment, an excess of confidence in his own opinion; but the consequences were of a fatal kind. It seems he relied upon a point of law and his skill as an advocate, and withheld from the jury certain important evidence—prevented, indeed, a most material witness from entering the box. The general opinion was that this witness could have fully established the innocence of the accused, for the best of reasons, some say, that the witness was the real criminal, and the accused wholly innocent. But the case for the prosecution involved the prisoner in a complicated web of circumstantial evidence which the advocate vainly endeavoured to break through. He missed the real weak place in it, and misdirected his attack. The defence failed miserably; the prisoner died on the scaffold. Popular sympathies went with him—he was proclaimed a murdered man. Curtis was denounced on all hands. It was ruin to him, or something very like ruin. His health broke down; symptoms of aberration ensued. He was sent home by an early ship to his relations in England. On the passage he went, simply, raving mad, and it was found necessary to confine him in irons. In that state he came to me. He has ever since remained an inmate of my establishment. I don't know that I need enter further into the case; but I

have here full particulars if you feel interested in them. 'Course of treatment pursued,' set out at great length; I like to record every detail of the case, with the dates, medicines administered, &c. 'Acute dementia,' 'acetate of morphia with hot baths,' and so on; 'suicidal monomania;' a long story, you see, until we come to 'settled melancholia,' 'no lucid intervals,' 'general health very bad,' 'extreme prostration of bodily strength.' A very curious case altogether, and, in its way one of the most distressing that ever came under my attention."

He closed the book. I was silent for some minutes, reflecting upon what I had heard. I then stated to Dr. Gurwood the facts of my former acquaintance with Curtis and his consultation with me in regard to his mental condition. I told the story of the delusion, if it was to be so called, under which he laboured.

"That entirely confirms my view that a predisposition to aberration had long existed," said Doctor Gurwood.

"Can you account in any way for the curious circumstance that the face he saw in the glass, or thought he saw, at any rate that he made a drawing of, long years ago, is really an accurate resemblance of the man himself in his present deplorable state?"

He did not answer very directly.

"You are sure that you are not yourself importing fancy into the case? That your own recollection of Curtis's story and of the drawings he exhibited to you, is perfectly sound and unquestionable? Imagination, you know, is very apt to play tricks with memory, to add colour to its facts, to distort their form and substance. The man was, of course, the victim of a delusion. The insanity he now suffers under, had already, though perhaps imperceptibly, commenced. His mind was yielding, it was presently to give away altogether."

I ventured to suggest that his observations did not fairly meet the case.

"I can only deal confidently with my own facts," he said. "I can't accept your facts as though they were within my own experience. I must, if I may say so without offence, doubt your statement of the case. Impressed with Curtis's delusion, have you not built upon it another delusion?"

"I could only say that I was not a likely man, I thought, to be the subject of delusions."

"Certainly not," he said. "But it's your case, and, therefore, I don't feel bound to

find an explanation of it. You see, as scientific, as sensible men, we can't admit, we can't discuss for a moment, the conclusion to which your story points, the theory of prophetic vision which Highlanders call or used to call—for I don't suppose they still cling to such notions—*second sight*. There's an explanation for you if you like to accept it."

"But is there no other?" I asked.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "taking your statement of the case, why not regard it as one of mental hallucination attended by remarkable complications of coincidence?"

The definition did not satisfy me, and I could see that he was not himself content with it. But I had not—I have not now—any other to offer.

### THE LAMP'S TIDINGS.

A LIGHT step on the gravel outside at this juncture aroused Arthur Stacey's attention, and the next moment the door opened, and one of the Slaves stood before him.

"Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Stacey, at so late an hour," he said, "but Heart's Content has just asked us whether you were at Valentia; and the superintendent thinks you had better come round, as there may probably be a message for you soon."

Arthur Stacey rose, and with a beating heart, accompanied the Slave, who left him in the outer office, while he entered the inner temple alone. The Slave in waiting on the Lamp was murmuring of Copperheads and shoddy, of Erie Railroad and Fernando Wood, and Mr. Gay stood by his side.

He turned round as Arthur entered and said, "Nothing for you yet, Mr. Stacey: this is an apparently interminable press message about matters which are not cared for in America, and not understood in England. Ah! at last there is an end to it," he exclaimed, as the spot of light became stationary in the centre of the screen.

"I should think," said Arthur Stacey,

struggling hard to repress his nervous excitement, which was now very great, "I should think that Cameron must have some news for me, or he would never have inquired if I were here."

"No mistake about that," said Mr. Gay. "Mr. Cameron is the most perfectly practical man I know. I've seen his head tried under many difficulties, and never knew him for an instant to lose—Hullo! what's this? Heart's Content is speaking again. C—A—M, this looks like your message, Mr. Stacey."

The spot of light was already slowly traversing the screen, and the superintendent himself, not a little anxious, bent forward to translate its silent language; but now that Arthur Stacey knew that in another few moments he would learn his future fate, his energies, already so strongly taxed, seemed unequal to the occasion, and he leaned down over the mantelpiece, burying his head in his arms.

"Cameron—Heart's Content—to—Stacey—Valentia," the Slave commenced reading, when Mr. Gay motioned him to be silent, and taking a pencil and paper from his pocket, wrote off the words as they appeared upon the screen. The instant the spot of light became stationary, the superintendent wheeled round and touched Arthur on the shoulder, then immediately grasped him by the hand. "I congratulate you, Mr. Stacey," he cried, in a cheery tone, "you and the young lady. Read what Cameron says. No, you cannot, your eyes are dimmed with tears. Listen, then, while I read the message to you:

"ALL RIGHT. E. P. DIED ON DATE STATED. NEW SCHEME PLOTTED BETWEEN BOWES AND E. P.'S SISTER NOW IN NEW YORK. I HOLD PROOFS. GO HOME AND SETTLE DAY. COMING BACK BY NEXT MAIL."

"Ah, thank God!" cried Arthur, as the superintendent stopped reading, "this is the——" But his voice broke, and the happy tears rolled down his face.

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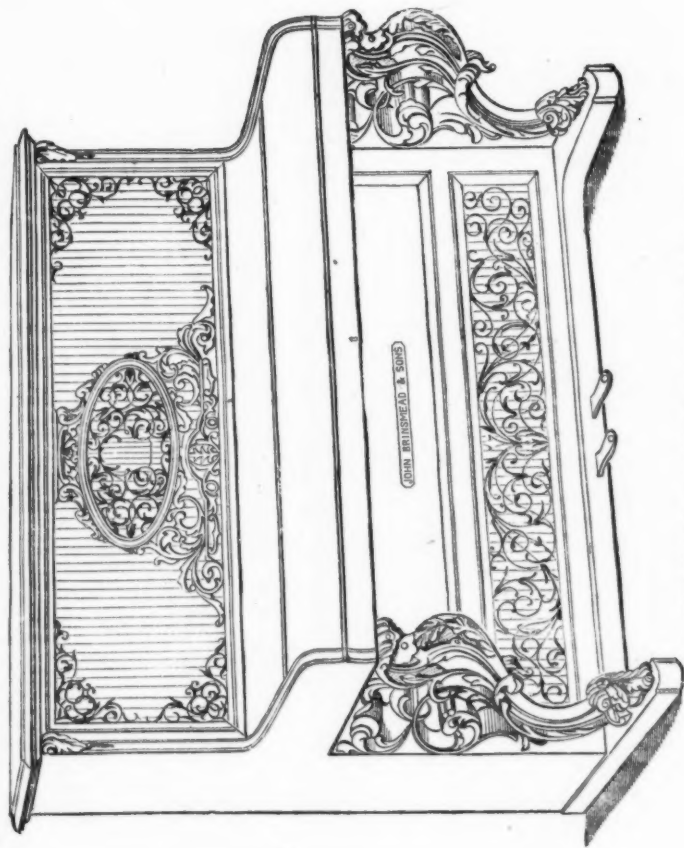
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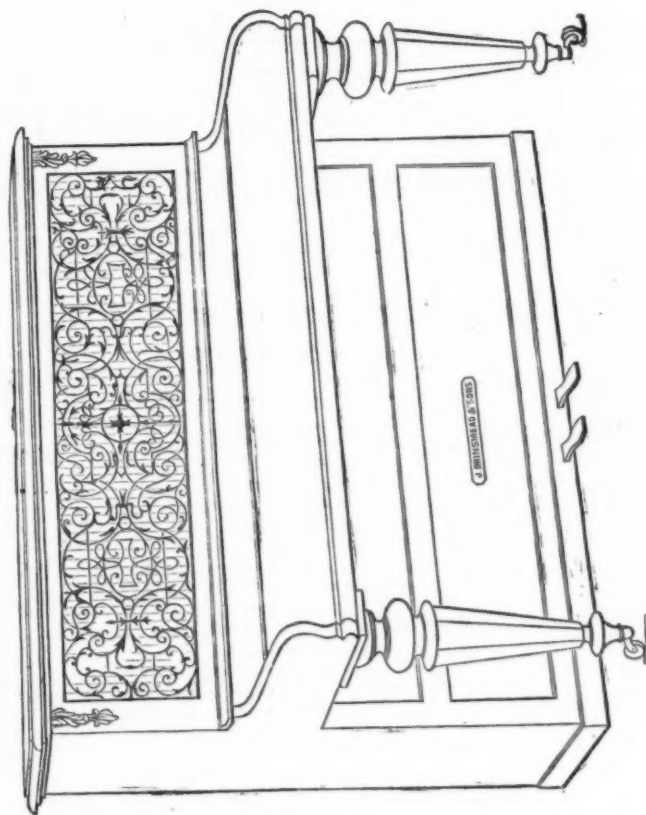
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**The Accumulated Funds now exceed £1,850,000.**

On this point reference is made to the "Notes on the Position of the Institution," which will be found reprinted on the fourth page.

**Exemption from Personal Liability.**—The Funds of the Institution are, by its Deed of Constitution, as well as by the terms of its Policies, alone liable for all claims against it of whatever nature—the Members themselves being specially exempt from personal liability.

EDINBURGH, December 1871.

JAMES WATSON, *Manager*.

London Office: 18 King William Street, E.C.

# Scottish Provident Institution.

## NEW BUSINESS OF 1870.

THE DIRECTORS' REPORT to the Thirty-third Annual General Meeting shows that, notwithstanding the marked falling off in the amount of Assurances last year in offices generally, the business of this Society maintained its usual progressive advance. The New Assurances completed were 1163, for £612,025, with Yearly Premiums of £19,481; and £1283 by single payment. The following Table shows the BIENNIAL PROGRESS of the INSTITUTION in the last eight years.

In Years.	New Policies.	Amount Assured.	Accumulated Funds at End of Period.
1863-4	1842	£948,949	£1,023,487
1865-6	2086	1,013,474	1,245,372
1867-8	2465*	1,162,701	1,499,015
1869-70	2373	1,193,060	1,765,251

\* These include a considerable number of Short-Term Assurances to secure contingent Bonuses.

The Funds having thus for some time increased at the rate of £130,000 a-year.

## LIFE ASSURANCE AS AN INVESTMENT.

THE DIRECTORS invite attention to the advantageous character (viewed as an investment) of LIFE ASSURANCE by a SINGLE PAYMENT, and to the favourable terms on which this can be effected in this Institution. A Table of such Premiums will be found on page 3 (last column), from which it will be seen that—

For a sum of £500, paid down, by a person of 35, a policy of £1277 may be obtained, payable to his family or executors at his death, however soon that may happen, with additions from the Profits on the Institution's very favourable principle of Division.

So long as he lives, he has nearly as much command of the money paid as if he had deposited it in a bank. He can either surrender his policy, or at any time borrow, on its security alone, without expense, and at a moderate rate of interest, a sum at first nearly equal to his payment, and increasing with the value of his assurance—continuing to rank in the division of profits according to the full amount of the policy.

At age 40, a policy for £1000 may be thus secured for a payment of £431:8:4.

A COMPARISON WITH THE RATES OF OTHER OFFICES WILL SHOW HOW MUCH MORE FAVOURABLE ARE THE ABOVE RATES THAN THOSE USUALLY CHARGED.

## PARTNERSHIP ASSURANCE.

THE DIRECTORS invite the attention of the Commercial Community to the beneficial uses to which Life Assurance may be applied, as a means of preventing the difficulties or inconvenience to which Mercantile Firms are frequently subjected by the withdrawal of Capital consequent on the death of one of the Partners.

The following illustrates this, and the rates may be had for other ages:—

Two Persons aged 30 and 35 may by an Annual Payment of £36:13:4, while both are alive, secure a Capital Sum of £1000 (with Profits) at death of either—payable to the survivor, or the general Capital of their Firm, as may be previously arranged.

This system, it will be seen, is also applicable to the case of Assurances on the joint lives of HUSBAND and WIFE.

Manchester Office: Somerset Buildings, 19 Brazennose Street.



# Scottish Provident Institution.

TABLE OF PREMIUMS, BY DIFFERENT MODES OF PAYMENT,  
For Assurance of £100 at Death—With Profits.

Age next Birth- day.	Annual Premium pay- able during Life.	ANNUAL PREMIUM LIMITED TO			Single Payment.	Age next Birth- day.
		Twenty-one Payments.	Fourteen Payments.	Seven Payments.		
21	£1 16 3	£2 10 6	£3 4 11	£5 10 0	£33 0 1	21
22	1 16 9	2 11 0	3 5 9	5 11 0	33 5 10	22
23	1 17 2	2 11 6	3 6 5	5 12 1	33 11 2	23
24	1 17 7	2 12 1	3 6 11	5 13 1	33 16 5	24
25	1 18 0	2 12 6	3 7 3	5 14 0	34 2 0	25
26	1 18 6	2 13 0	3 7 10	5 14 11	34 8 2	26
27	1 19 2	2 13 6	3 8 7	5 15 11	34 16 1	27
28	1 19 11	2 14 1	3 9 5	5 17 1	35 4 9	28
29	2 0 8	2 14 8	3 10 3	5 18 6	35 14 1	29
*30	2 1 6	2 15 4	3 11 2	6 0 1	36 4 0	*30
31	2 2 6	2 16 2	3 12 1	6 1 10	36 14 6	31
32	2 3 5	2 17 1	3 13 2	6 3 8	37 5 5	32
33	2 4 6	2 18 0	3 14 4	6 5 8	37 17 2	33
34	2 5 7	2 19 0	3 15 7	6 7 9	38 9 7	34
35	2 6 10	3 0 2	3 16 11	6 10 0	39 2 9	35
36	2 8 2	3 1 5	3 18 4	6 12 5	39 16 11	36
37	2 9 8	3 2 9	3 19 11	6 15 0	40 12 4	37
38	2 11 3	3 4 3	4 1 7	6 17 9	41 8 7	38
39	2 12 11	3 5 9	4 3 4	7 0 7	42 5 4	39
†40	2 14 9	3 7 5	4 5 2	7 3 7	43 2 10	†40
41	2 16 8	3 9 2	4 7 2	7 6 8	44 0 11	41
42	2 18 8	3 11 1	4 9 3	7 9 11	44 19 9	42
43	3 0 11	3 13 1	4 11 5	7 13 3	45 19 3	43
44	3 3 3	3 15 3	4 13 10	7 16 9	46 19 7	44
45	3 5 9	3 17 6	4 16 4	8 0 7	48 0 8	45
46	3 8 5	4 0 0	4 19 1	8 4 6	49 2 8	46
47	3 11 5	4 2 8	5 2 1	8 8 8	50 5 8	47
48	3 14 8	4 5 8	5 5 4	8 13 2	51 9 7	48
49	3 18 1	4 8 9	5 8 9	8 17 11	52 14 1	49
50	4 1 7	4 12 1	5 12 4	9 2 10	53 19 3	50
51	4 5 6	4 15 5	5 16 1	9 7 11	55 4 5	51
52	4 9 5	4 18 10	5 19 11	9 13 1	56 9 0	52
53	4 13 5	5 2 5	6 3 11	9 18 3	57 12 11	53
54	4 17 8	5 6 3	6 8 0	10 3 5	58 17 2	54
55	5 1 11	5 10 2	6 12 1	10 8 6	60 0 8	55
56	5 6 4	.....	6 14 9	10 13 7	61 3 8	56
57	5 10 11	.....	6 18 8	10 18 8	62 6 5	57
58	5 15 9	.....	7 2 9	11 3 10	63 9 4	58
59	6 1 0	.....	7 7 3	11 9 0	64 12 11	59
60	6 6 7	.....	7 12 0	11 14 3	65 16 9	60

[These Rates are about as low as the usual non-participating Rates.]

\* A person of 30 may thus secure £1000 at Death, by a yearly payment, during life, of £20:15s. This Premium, if paid to any other of the Scottish Mutual Offices, would secure £800 only, instead of £1000.

OR, if unwilling to burden himself with payments during his whole life, he may secure the same sum of £1000 by twenty-one yearly payments of £27:13:4.

† At age 40 the Premium ceasing at age 60, is, for £1000, £33:14:2, being about the same as most Offices require during the whole term of life.

Glasgow Office: 67 St. Vincent Street.

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
**SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION**  
INSTITUTED IN 1837.

NOTES ON THE POSITION OF THE INSTITUTION AS SHOWN ON THE  
**'Life Insurance Chart 1871.'**

THE CHART\* is in the comparative fulness of its details a result of the recent discussions, in the press and legislature, on the stability of the British Offices; and contains an amount of information previously unattainable, compiled from official statements published by the Offices themselves.

It gives details more or less full of the yearly Progress and Financial Position of 87 different Life Offices,—of which 14 were established prior to 1820,—17 between 1820 and 1830,—19 (including the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT) between 1830 and 1840,—and 37 since the last-mentioned year.

Of the whole 87, the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT is 46th in point of age.

**IN AMOUNT OF NEW BUSINESS** in the last year, the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT stands 8th; but in a more exact or discriminating comparison, its position is higher. For, of the seven which exceed it in new business, most are amalgamated Offices, some of them composed of no less than 10 or 12 different Offices, with their accumulated agencies and machinery. Some, again, have numerous foreign branches, and draw a large proportion of their business from abroad.

**IN AGGREGATE OF ASSURANCES**, it will be seen the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT is ahead of most, even of the older, Offices. Upwards of 15,000 Policies are now in force;—thus affording an unusually large and safe basis for the Society's operations.

**IN ACCUMULATED FUNDS**, the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT occupies a yet higher *relative* position. Two elements mainly affect such a comparison—the rate of the *Premiums* charged, and the *age*, or number of years during which the Income has been accumulated. Though a half of the Offices in the list are older, and though all of them have higher rates of Premium, yet it stands 18th in amount of Funds. No office of later establishment has so large a Fund. The age of the Offices which exceed it averages 60 years. The Funds *now* exceed £1,750,000.

FROM similar statistics published in the "Insurance Register," as for the year 1864, it appears the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT then occupied the 24th place in regard to accumulated Life Funds. By comparing the amounts then and at the present time, it is found that (omitting two Offices which have been increased largely by amalgamation) only one Office shows as large an increase as the SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION; while, in no single Office, has there been so large a *proportionate* increase.

SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION, EDINBURGH,  
2d January 1871.

\* Compiled by William White, Esq., F.S.S. (*Laytons, Fleet Street*.)

Dublin Office: 16 College Green.

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The Instant Cure for Tic-Doloreux, Neuralgia, Sciatica, Tooth-Ache, Rheumatism, Gout, Rheumatic Gout, and all Nerve Pains.

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